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Japanese Women's *Shishôsetsu*:
Some Limitations of "Universal" Literary Criteria

by

Cathy P. Steblyk



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

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And Film/Media Studies

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Japanese Women's Shishôsetsu: Some Limitations of "Universal" Literary Criteria* submitted by Cathy P. Steblyk in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature.

Dedication

To Mary Ann Semeniuk and Dr. Peter Steblyk,

In Memoriam,

For the wise lessons of love and life they have taught me,

And to Kennedy Patricia Tralnberg

Who will learn more

Abstract

The genre “I-novel” has been theorized by apparently “universal” and “objective” literary criteria. The present study interrogates the gendered, historical, literary, cultural, and national assumptions that underlie these previous approaches to *shishôsetsu*. The writings of two women authors featured in this study, namely Uno Chiyo and Tsushima Yûko, historically span almost the entire 20th century and provide a diverse field of texts generically considered *shishôsetsu*. Uno’s writing is discussed in the context of the commodification and self-reflexivity of the writer’s body, while Tsushima’s I-fiction will be shown to demonstrate more imaginative narrations of personal experience beyond the “realistic” portrayal assumed by traditional genre approaches. Through attention to the narrative bodies of Uno and Tsushima, I conclude that *shishôsetsu* genre criticism has reflected certain ideological aims that are challenged by the recognition of diverse bodies of writing.

Rather than positing a structuralist genre definition, through these two writers I suggest that the basic operation that *shishôsetsu* performs is a relation of difference. Breaking dramatically with genre criticism that isolates certain kinds of writing and subjects as intrinsic generic features, I re-define *shishôsetsu* heuristically as “writing of the body.” The narrative performance of the body is understood in terms of a material as well as a discursive body that continues to surface as *shishôsetsu*’s focus, in both modern and contemporary, and women’s or men’s literature. From personal texts of sexual confession to the representation of an author’s projected mental states, “I-fiction” narratives can be considered a discursive construction of a body of real, individual

experience as well as a text of identity or difference produced by the readers' recognition of this performance. The present investigation of *shishôsetsu* narrative authority, realist/naturalist modes of representation, Japanese modernity, as well as *joryû bungaku* or "women's writing" is informed by post-structuralist, post-colonialist, and feminist approaches to the subject and to narrative. By questioning the notions of authors, authority, and authenticity, I challenge the centrality of specific discourses of representation and identity that have bolstered previous theories of *shishôsetsu*, particularly those having to do with modernity, with gendered "male" experience, and with "Japanese" identity.

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Japanese Women's *Shishôsetsu*:

Some Limitations of "Universal" Literary Criteria

Introduction: Re-Introducing <i>Shishôsetsu</i> and Its Limits	1
Chapter One: Comparative Projects	17
Universals	17
<i>Shishôsetsu</i> Genre Theory.....	29
Chapter Two: <i>Shishôsetsu</i> and Women Writers in Japan	38
The Traditional <i>Shishôsetsu</i> Body	38
Writing of the Body: A New Genre Definition.....	47
Daring Difference	62
Why Women's Writing?	68
Chapter Three: Uno Chiyo	86
Uno as Ingenue	87
Love and Sex in <i>Shishôsetsu</i>	97
Ingenue Received.....	106
These Boots are Made for Walking: Itineracy and the Modern Woman.....	118
Uno's Visible/Lisible Happiness, 1917-1996: Taking a "Spectator's Stance"	129
Chapter Four: Tsushima Yûko.....	147
Chased By the Light of the Night	147
The Frame	150
The Discursive Intertext, the Well	155
Autobiography and Hyper-reality	167
Tsushima's Novel of the "I": The Real Body	194
Chapter Five: Reconsidering <i>Shishôsetsu</i>	209
Re-Defining the Oxymoron "I-fiction".....	209
The Body of the Author, Amen (Again)	214
Sex and Truth, Risk and Identity	219
Chapter Six: "Literature of the Lost Home": Leaving the Nest.....	242
Bibliography: Primary Texts	260
Tsushima Yûko	260
Translations in English and French	261
Uno Chiyo	262
Translations in English	263
Bibliography: Secondary Texts.....	265
Appendices	296

Introduction: Re-Introducing *Shishôsetsu* and Its Limits

Ilse: “Can I tell you a story?” [pause] “I don’t know the finish yet.”

Rick: “Well, go on, tell it. Maybe one will come to you as you go along.”

Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

This study of a Japanese genre is, like Ilse’s, a story of process. It does not already “know” its texts nor its end, and in this way mirrors the way I propose to recast both the theory and practice of identifying the genre *shishôsetsu*. I will suggest a way of rethinking textual categorization that has not been engaged previously in discussion of *shishôsetsu* and certain of its texts while exposing nationalist, modernist, epistemological, generic, and gender biases in the literary institution that have mistakenly come to serve as universal literary criteria for the genre. An analysis of the construction of the subject in personal fiction by two female authors, Uno Chiyo (1897-1996) and Tsushima Yûko (1947—), will provide compelling material for the re-examination of what constitutes both the narrated subject and the genre of the so-called “I-novel” in Japan. The structure of the present study offers an exploration of the works of Uno and Tsushima at its heart. In a sense, then, this investigation parallels how genre theory and certain universal criteria applied to texts may constitute the discourse of and around *shishôsetsu*, but underlines how the real author integral to the narration of individual experience must be made pivotal to studies and definitions of this genre.

Though a well-used generic category in Japan, *shishôsetsu* is itself a literary rubric. English, Japanese, and even German terms synonymous with the Japanese project of fictional writing of one’s life include *shishôsetsu*, *watakushi shôsetsu*, and I-novel,¹ as

¹ I use the term *shishôsetsu* rather than *watakushi shôsetsu*, as Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit does in her study, as the former is understood to more readily encompass readings of either

well as *Ich-Roman*, autobiographical fiction, confessional writing, confessional fiction, rhetorical confession, personal fiction, personal novel, I-fiction, and I-writing. Though often used interchangeably or ambiguously, or even to separate men's writing from that by women, these terms are not always without evaluative content. They designate, however, a genre widely understood as a first- or third-person modern Japanese fictional narrative that describes the author's lived experience. Yet the multitudes of biographical examinations of individual authors' lives, the testing of textual correspondence, and even an emphasis on an historically particular *shishôsetsu* author's desire to confess together speak volumes of the critical assumptions that surround the genre, but little to the more general methodological practice of isolating *shishôsetsu*. While asking again "What is *shishôsetsu*?" the present study will attend to the ideologically invested positions taken up by readers, critics, and the literary institution who choose a certain historical period, texts, and authors as exemplary generic figures that have led effectively to structuralist and deductive genre definitions. If, for example, the genre is defined as a modern Japanese phenomenon,² its appearance also in contemporary Japanese letters encourages readers to

the first or third person of autobiographical fiction. Of further note, though *shishôsetsu* has been translated as "I-novel," a better translation may be "prose," "prose narrative," and particularly "fiction" as the latter choices denote, as James A. Fujii in *Complicit Fictions: The Subject in Modern Japanese Prose Fiction* (1993) also remarks, less a sense of teleological narrative than "novel" implies.

² The term "modern" may be used to designate the Imperial Restoration of 1868, or literary convention that generally begins around 1890. For the purpose of the present study, I use modern in the latter sense, with a particular focus on literary development occurring in the 1910s and 1920s, but extending to the period of World War II. Contemporary literature therefore will be that writing produced after World War II, with a stress on the period of the 1970s to the present.

ask whether or not it is strictly a modern mode of narration, and to reconsider what modern indicates. In addition, readers might also inquire as to whether or not the actual content of the “I-novel” or the generic understanding of *shishôsetsu* has shifted over the course of the twentieth century. A linked question would be: “Have the foci and interests of the literary and cultural institutions changed with respect to identifying *shishôsetsu*?”

As will be made apparent in the first chapter which studies European-Japanese comparative approaches to the genre, these questions implying the possibility of either an essentialist or an historical approach to *shishôsetsu* are integral to the study of any genre. As the present study will make evident, though, cultural essentialism or a preoccupation with temporal progression take on particular significance here as this genre highlights the apparently different experience of the author at the turn of the century, that is, the individual Japanese subject. More specifically, when *shishôsetsu* is described as a modern Japanese phenomenon, the emergence of the genre may also be linked to the establishment of concepts of the modern subject and individual identity in Japan, particularly those identities discovered in opposition to the West. With such readings, the “I-novel” is a significant literary manifestation of a particular historical, social, and philosophical climate, and the self of *shishôsetsu* the emancipated individual. However if, as the present study also shows, the genre is considered a modern as well as a contemporary occurrence, narratives which feature the unique self and individual difference can be seen to occupy continually a significant portion of the Japanese public imagination throughout the twentieth century. The limitations of a genre definition which includes “modern” thus are exposed, and the critical field, perhaps even more strikingly, will even open up beyond European-Japanese comparison toward a reconsideration of whether or not *shishôsetsu* is fundamentally and only a Japanese genre.

We can assume that the single, historically unassailable component of the genre *shishôsetsu* is the authorial “I.” But what or who exactly is this “I”? A focus on the “I,” or 私 in the study of *shishôsetsu*, or 私小説, designates “I-fiction” and immediately

distinguishes 私小説 from the more general *shôsetsu* 小説 or “fiction.” It is vital to note that without the presence of this “I” who is a real author behind a fiction, no biographical reading of a text is possible, and the generic category collapses. In order to read *shishôsetsu* it is therefore necessary to read some sort of relation between narrated and actual experience. As will be discussed more thoroughly in subsequent chapters, certain specific historical, realist, comparatist, and structuralist definitions and assumptions, however, have guided the study of the “I” and genre classification in previous examinations of I-writing.

In contrast to these sort of generic approaches, I propose an understanding of all *shishôsetsu* as *mi no mawari wo kaku*, 身の回りを書く, or *shinpen no kakigoto*, 身辺の書きごと which indicate “writing around the body” or “writing of the body,” where this *body* is the authorial “I.” This heuristic description of the genre *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body* will be elaborated in chapter two. Here I would emphasize, though, how writing and reading *shishôsetsu* is a method of discovery focused on the individual “I.” The merit of this theoretical approach lies in its explanatory power, in the potential of a more general description of the genre’s function rather than of its texts’ specific components. Moreover, *writing of the body* allows for the possibility of single autobiographical-fictional texts to “become” members of the genre. “Becoming” in this sense parallels an understanding of the performance of individual identity as outlined by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble*, where individual identity is also constructed on a material body “becoming” through performance rather than “being” or possessing a certain and specific identity.³ Uniquely though not exclusively applicable to this genre of

³ The notion of “becoming” is drawn from both Judith Butler’s feminist understanding of both the performativity of gender and the materiality of the body. Her thesis offers that the subject is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because signification is not a founding act, but rather identity is constructed as a regulated process of repetition, as

autobiographical fiction, this notion of “becoming” will serve as metaphor and method toward understanding how the “I” is written and read in *shishôsetsu* as well as how the genre itself operates. That is, *shishôsetsu* will be examined in its function, rather than any specific forms, so that a text can be considered a member of the genre even if it does not possess the characteristics of, say, early twentieth-century confessional I-fiction. *Writing of the body* is also thus a genre description arrived at, as will be apparent in the study of Uno’s and Tsushima’s writing, through recognizing the kinds of bodies and the methods of narrating and reading the self previous genre definitions of *shishôsetsu* seem unable, or unwilling, to acknowledge.

As a genre description, I prefer to use writing of the “body” rather than writing of “identity” because the term “body” more readily activates association with the real, lived experience of the physical, authorial “I” behind the fictional text. The character 身 read *mi* (its *kunyomi* or Japanese reading) or *shin* (its *onyomi* or Chinese reading), and common to both descriptions of the *shishôsetsu* I offer above, is used to indicate *body* in the broadest sense. The 身 character is present in the compound 身体 *shintai*, a word developed post-Meiji meaning the physical body, and 身辺 or *shinpen*, meaning one’s person. Further, the character *mi* is present in the combination 身分 or *mibun*, indicating one’s social status or one’s portion according to one’s place in the world.⁴ In sum, 身 indicates the heart and

theorized in *Gender Trouble*. Butler adds: “there need not be a doer behind the deed but that the doer is variably constructed in and through the deed.” Camilla Griggers’s study in *Becoming-Woman* also contributes toward the present deployment of an understanding of woman “becoming” “as an abstract-machine concretely produced by late-twentieth-century technologies and capital”(ix).

⁴ I thank Sonja Arntzen for her insight into the readings of this body, who also links the body reading to that of *mi no ue* from the *Kagerô Diary* of Heian literature, indicating the

mind as well as flesh and meat, both of oneself and of a self in relation to other bodies. 身の回りを書く or *writing of the body* understood in this way thus encompasses the physical, biological, emotional, and psychological realms of the individual body. This body can be descriptive also of the unique individual in relation to society. Indebted to Western, particularly post-structuralist and feminist, approaches to personal writing and conceptions of the individual or self,⁵ the *body* presented and discovered in *shishôsetsu* can be understood as a bio-political being who possesses a generative, discursive identity. The usefulness, as well as the imaginary potential, of engaging such a multifaceted understanding of the subject of the genre autobiographical fiction will become apparent over the course of the present reconsideration of the “I” of *shishôsetsu* conducted.

As outlined above, it is indispensable that the body of *shishôsetsu* is understood not only as material, historical, and physical: importantly, it is also discursive. Briefly, I isolate three inter-related components to describe this discursive body in writing. The first can be understood as the mutable, performed identity of “I” that does not necessarily maintain a unified, authoritative, strictly historical body through fictive writings and re-writings, and is thus a body produced in discourse. The second component is the creation of a self in

narrator’s consciousness of writing matters of a personal versus social nature. The terms social and personal are not necessarily exclusive to each other, however, but describe the authorial body both positioned within the social stratification of society, and as an intimate, personal, and individual body. Though I will only touch on Heian women’s literature in the present study, what is significant is an understanding of the way *mi* as body indicates more than a simple, corporeal body in isolation, an idea that will be integral to my ongoing discussion of *shishôsetsu*.

⁵ I use “I,” the self, the subject, the individual, and the body interchangeably to indicate the Japanese focal figure, or “author-hero relation”(Hijiya-Kirschner), the *shi* of *shishôsetsu*.

relation to the social realm, both in the narrative and in actual life, who is thus also a potentially transgressive self. This social context created by discourse is an integral mechanism of the literature of this genre that features the difference of self/other(s). The third aspect of the discursive body in writing is the creation of the self in communication, that is, the “I” as produced through contact with the reader and through circulation in the marketplace.

In chapter two, I describe at length these related features of the discursive body. Here a brief look at the early writing of one of the masters of the genre, Shiga Naoya (1883-1971), anticipates how the identity of the “I” for all *shishôsetsu* can be thought of as discursive in the above ways. Notably, this choice of a *shishôsetsu* master to demonstrate aspects of the discursive body is deliberate: as the present study will obviate, all *shishôsetsu* bodies, not only women’s autobiographical selves, may be analyzed in the following way. With respect to the sense that the author’s individual identity is performed in writing and surrounding media, we gain an understanding of the individual author Shiga in his repeated telling of the strained relationship he has as a young man with his father, for example, that also seems supported by peripheral biographical reports.⁶ As another critic puts it, “Shiga’s writings invite the kind of reading that assumes a single, continuous personality at work in them”(Suzuki 93). The body of the author is discursively created in

⁶ Three stories among others that illustrate the rift between Shiga and his father are *Ôtsu Junkitchi* (1912), *Wakai (Reconciliation)*, 1917), and *Aru Otoko, sono Ane no shi (A certain man and the death of his sister)*, 1920). The latter story in particular contributes to a sense that a personality of the author is established through narrative, though does not remain unified and authoritative, because this story contains elements that the author attributes to an elder brother’s experience even though they are Shiga’s. Moreover, the narrative contains more fictional elements than the previous two texts, although all are read biographically.

the second aforementioned way, moreover, in the social systems generated and presented in the text itself, as read in *Wakai (Reconciliation)*, 1917). Here we are told that his father has refused Shiga and his partner at his house despite Shiga's wife's ill health. The conflict is another episode in the clash between father and son previously voiced in Shiga's political stance against his father, in resistance to the patriarchal system that demands obedience, and in the class distinctions Shiga disturbs at an earlier point when he threatens to marry their maid. In addition to the dissolute atmosphere surrounding the isolated Shiga self, the recounted episode reflects the experience of an individual within a system of social mores and economic upheaval in early twentieth-century Japanese society. In this way, the narrative description of the father's refusal implicitly and discursively produces a sense of the uniqueness of the individual as well as of the social restraints and notions of proper conduct that act upon him. Finally, I illustrate the third way in which writing of the body can be considered discursive, namely that identity is created in the necessary interaction between text and reader. Here the reader who is familiar with Shiga's background and earlier works will understand in a particular way the changing autobiographical portrait of the author. This occurs as the child presented in *Haha no shi to atarashii haha (My Mother's Death and my New Mother)*, 1912), who has no room for his father's love, transforms in Shiga's literature to a man who eventually makes peace with his father in *Wakai*.

Writing of the body, as seen in the example above, is thus a description of the "I" in the *shishôsetsu* act that encompasses the singularity of the actual author while acknowledging the discursive creation of identity. After a discussion in chapters one and two of the limited conception of the subject and modes of narration that have become nonetheless embedded features of previous *shishôsetsu* definitions, *shishôsetsu* works by Uno Chiyo and Tsushima Yûko and their reception will be examined in chapters three and four. The decision to look at these writers' *shishôsetsu* in order to discuss *writing of the body* is not to present Uno and Tsushima —texts or authors— as strictly similar, nor even

exemplary members of any essential group of writing. If Uno's I-writing is *akarui*, or light, cheerful, even familiar or clear, Tsushima's *shishôsetsu* have been described as *kurai*, or dark and gloomy, perhaps also muddy or unfamiliar. Their clearly disparate narrative ambitions and projects are evidence of the varied approaches to the illumination of individual experience and subject creation. Through examining works by both authors, I hope to present the diversity of modern, post-World War II, and contemporary individual bodies articulated by *shishôsetsu* writing in Japan. Their individual examples not only articulate the experience of the female gendered subject, but also span almost a full century of Japanese fiction, though *shishôsetsu* theory has been overwhelmingly informed by attention to the subject and modes of narration in the writing of the early part of the century.

Judging from Uno's popularity in the early half of the twentieth century, later TV appearances, magazine articles, the media coverage of her birthday celebrations, and recent obituaries, the Taishô (1912-1926) and present-day public has always had a fascination for the Uno of real life and Uno's fictional self. This interest is evident as well in the positive and negative reception and commodification of both Uno and Uno's *shishôsetsu*. The provocative subject that is "Tsushima" presented in her *shishôsetsu* has also held considerable general and critical public interest, though, it seems, a narrower cultural market share. Structurally, however, both their works can be seen to conform to traditional definitions of the genre, as prose "narrated in first or third person in such a way as to represent with utter conviction the author's personal experience"(Fowler xvi). Uno's and Tsushima's *shishôsetsu* also may be considered "autobiographical narratives in which the author is thought to recount faithfully the details of his or her personal life in a thin guise of fiction"(Suzuki 1). In addition, both Uno's and Tsushima's *shishôsetsu* display "a psychological ego that is the subject matter of *watakushi-shishôsetsu*"(Karatani 96). Finally, their *shishôsetsu* also display a desire to "write undisguisedly"(Karatani 157) as exhibited by other typically designated *shishôsetsu* writers such as Tayama Katai (1871-

1930), Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943), Shiga Naoya, and Dazai Osamu (1909-1948). The consumption of Uno's and Tsushima's *shishôsetsu*, like other canonized authors', also is an indication of a public interest in sustaining the illusion of reality in the represented "I" of both authors.

Nevertheless, if one looks toward other related aspects of the literary institution, though the media-pet Uno has published much popular and fashionable autobiographical fiction for four eras, it is apparent that her personal fiction is largely critically and institutionally ignored by *shishôsetsu* theorists. Likely due to its wide or mass appeal, "inferior" artistry, and "female" themes, Uno's work usually remains outside *shishôsetsu* genre consideration. Though told from a woman's point of view, Uno's themes are often concerned with personal struggles, happiness, and love, which otherwise seem to be prominent themes in modern men's *shishôsetsu*. The critical omission of her texts implies the presence of certain elite notions of a gendered and modernist aesthetic, or of canonically sanctioned ideas of literary value, at work in Japan's critical literary institutions.

For her part, Tsushima's intellectual, aesthetically challenging representations of real experience achieved through engaging more fictional and imaginative narrative worlds would likely appeal more to the *avant garde* literary establishment, and indeed have, judging from recent academic attention given her work. Re-reading Tsushima's works, I am startled again by the stark way in which, by articulating experience from the margins, Tsushima reveals the everyday confusion and terror experienced by individuals living within society's contemporary institutions. Though addressing issues of contemporary Japanese society, Tsushima's writing at the same time echoes the intent of earlier *shishôsetsu* writers, that is, an interest in exposing the frank, even disturbing, truth of the human condition through attention to their individual lives. Genre definitions favoring the historically earlier texts and marked by a focus on realist conventions, however, will prove limited when applied to her writing. Moreover, Tsushima's personal narratives are often

treated simultaneously as some sort of dangerous, subversive, and destabilizing “female” (or sometimes feminist) force, and therefore are not always accessible nor accommodated by both the general reading public and the traditional and patriarchal literary institutions.

Like other canonized *shishôsetsu* authors, both Uno and Tsushima produce a sense of real and unique individual experience in their *shishôsetsu*. Chapters three and four of the present study, however, will disclose the ways in which Uno’s and Tsushima’s narratives of self also undermine traditional approaches to authors and authorial intentionality as unitary and absolute. It will be apparent how Tsushima’s writing in particular sets out to challenge methods of representation that trust in the objective portrayal of reality in the presentation of real experience. Through both Uno’s and Tsushima’s work, I will indicate how the self of *shishôsetsu* may not have to be conceived as an integrated, modernist subject, and how generic approaches may not have to be dependent on realist conventions and formed from the examples of modern Taishô confessional literature.

I will trace the movement of Uno’s highly self-conscious and public autobiographical body through her itinerant writing career, particularly through the figure of the iconoclast *new woman/modern girl* she portrays, and in the ways she re-writes her self over the course of her literary production. Examining Tsushima’s writing will indicate how the author’s body presented in her work is yet a faithful literary expression of an individual life. However, I will show also how the Naturalist impulse inscribed in traditional *shishôsetsu* criticism, and favoring the description of reality *aru no mama* or “as it is,” is transformed from a more or less objective confession into a highly subjective and imaginative universe of the narrated subject. I describe this narrative universe as “hyper-real” in chapter four.

Together, Uno’s and Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* are dissimilar literary products, though their narratives are like those of all other *shishôsetsu* authors in that they highlight the unique self and even marginalized experience. In both the beginning of the century and the present, the “I” or body of *shishôsetsu* has always been about individual difference.

Through examining Uno's and Tsushima's works, however, it can be shown how *shishôsetsu* definitions and criticism do not always provide for equitable consideration of the subjects actualized in their writing. While studying these two authors, the various properties I bring forward of the "I" or body of all *shishôsetsu*, namely that it is material, individual, and discursive, allow us to reconsider the performance of identity, self-representation, the subject, gender, and the literary reception of *shishôsetsu*. Furthermore, if the critical/literary institution is more ready to accept Tsushima's *shishôsetsu* into the canonically defined boundaries of "serious" literature, then the attention devoted here to Uno's body of writing also challenges the notions of high art and serious literature implicit in generic formulations.

The critical marginalization of Taishô women's autobiographical fiction, as well as the general institutional neglect of women's I-writing and experience, also call for a re-reading of the gendered and sexual body favored by *shishôsetsu* reception and criticism. The discussion of *joryû bungaku*, or "women's writing," in the present study addresses these gender-related issues. Here, gender is not presumed to be an essential, specific category of women's writing. Gender is an inevitable consideration in studies of both modern and contemporary Japan, its social and literary institutions, the maintenance of a separate category for women's writing, and with the inherently political position from which both female and male authors write of an individual life and experience. I argue that the individual woman's body, and thus women's *shishôsetsu*, presents a libidinal and real, and in some ways destabilizing, economy of female desire and experience which is considered at times intolerable, excessive, or dismissable, and thus generically insupportable.

Sharalyn Orbaugh's study of the female body read within the institutions of patriarchy is here indispensable to this study of the material, gendered, and discursive body of *shishôsetsu* and its generic reception. She offers that in addition to "the essentially physical nature of the way women experience the effects of the passive, female role in the

power paradigms [or] the dichotomies of patriarchal power,” women are “constantly reminded of their bodies by the way society makes of them a legal and moral abstraction”(124). That is, women are the “physical receiver/performers of all the abstract policies made by patriarchal institutions”(124).⁷

Orbaugh’s insight, that women are the receivers and performers of patriarchal policies and institutions is applicable here to our study of women’s *shishôsetsu*. As will be demonstrated at greater length in the context of the critical reception particularly of Uno’s writing, women’s writing was received differently than that of men, and women’s experience, written in *shishôsetsu*, was marginalized. It is in this context that Orbaugh’s study of Japanese women’s writing, where she finds in a restatement of Audre Lorde’s position that “the personal *is* the political,” is applicable. In the present study of *shishôsetsu* that is tied to an understanding of the body’s material as well as discursive dimensions, the “legal and moral abstractions” made of women’s bodies by patriarchal literary institutions seem to support this crucial reconsideration of women’s bodies offered in *shishôsetsu* as physical beings as well as identities constructed in an ideological and political arena. By foregrounding personal, real experience, not only do Uno and Tsushima demonstrate how the female physical body would be “a touchstone that could keep us centered”(Orbaugh 124) particularly in the context of personal writing. The subject presented in the I-novels of these two women writers of *shishôsetsu* inevitably is a political protagonist/narrator because she speaks of a woman’s lived experience in (a) patriarchal society(ies).

⁷ Orbaugh refers specifically “to the way a legal and moral abstraction is made out of the body in which a woman lives and walks around” as opposed to “the literary, erotic, or religious abstractions of the female body, which reduce it (some would say elevate) to the status of Woman—a cultural sign”(124).

Uniting the analysis of Uno's and Tsushima's *writing of the body* with a discussion of the gendered body and sex, chapter five contains a reconsideration of early Taishô-era *shishôsetsu* and canonized male literary confession that showed an interest in the raw, frank exposure of the author's most intimate personality. In addition to describing ordinary, everyday experience, the Naturalist movement (*shizenshugi*) favored objective description of the individual life. This interest in the intimate life was sometimes coupled with explorations of love (*ren'ai*) as well as with investigations of forms of Christianity present in Japan at the beginning of the century. These together led to the emergence of a large body of personal confessional writings that dealt with sex, marriage, romantic liaisons, love, and failure. Many modern *shishôsetsu* authors, as will be exemplified in work by Uno studied here, exposed the most carnal details of their private life and imaginings in a sincere attempt to reveal the truth of the human condition in all its individual impurity. This sexual confession, particularly that of male experience, both implicitly and explicitly informs traditional approaches to *shishôsetsu*.

It will be shown that the Taishô and early Shôwa (1926-1989) subject, that is, the new individual of confessional, sexual, and self-interested men's writing, engendered and overdetermined a way of conceiving the subject of *shishôsetsu* in subsequent genre approaches. The present comparison between confessional *shishôsetsu* criticism and approaches to Uno's and Tsushima's written bodies will indicate how it is possible to reconsider the tension produced by risk and recognition of the individual body in the *shishôsetsu* act itself. This is done by replacing the previous generic, historically particular, equation of sexual confession and truth with an understanding of the exposure of the body, the revealing of the self, and, by extension, a revealing of the difference of the individual in society.

Rather than focus on specific manifestations of the I-novel, I will look more generally at the mechanics of *shishôsetsu* present in both men's and in women's writing that illuminate the author's individual difference and identity. The construction and reading

of the subject occurs at the interface of the author's desire for recognition of the subject and the politics of a readership that "make sense" of both different individual experience and of society, including that with which an individual does not always correspond. Any "I," including the written Taishô individual of *shishôsetsu*, is ideological in the sense that it would not have neither the literary impact nor the political, nationalist, and social import it carried(s) if not for the social institutions within which the specific body or individual arises. Ideologies, which effectively structure the positioning of subjects in relations of power, exist both in everyday practice and in narrative and critical discourse. Even if various ideologies are not explicitly stated in the narratives, nor in critical approaches to *shishôsetsu*, subject creation and critical approaches to *shishôsetsu* demonstrate the ideological context within individual experience is produced, interpreted, and evaluated. In the case studied here, genre criticism's historical, ideological preoccupation with a limited range of *shishôsetsu* brings much to bear not only on the reception of the female voice, but also on the reception of specific subjects of both modern and contemporary *shishôsetsu*.

I return to "universals" and the problem of the relative unity with which the genre *shishôsetsu* and the subject of autobiographical fiction have been considered in my final chapter. It will become evident that genre approaches which have focused on an emergent Japanese modern subject and plot an authoritative, positivist "I" on a trajectory of twentieth-century progress in Japan operate to the critical exclusion of certain "I" writing, particularly post- World War II writing and that by women. The ways that the *body* integral to *shishôsetsu* writing has been narrated or elided in genre studies, that is, based on comparison with Western notions of the individual and as party to developing notions of Japanese national and gendered identity will be made clear. This will be done through exposing criticism's claim on the unique Japanese subject and Japanese identity via *shishôsetsu*.

Throughout the present study, it will become increasingly apparent how it is possible to describe the written "I" or body of all modern and

contemporary *shishôsetsu* in Japan as an author-subject that is real yet discursive, non-positivist, and non-authoritative. Former practices of segregating certain historical periods and isolating specific modes of representation, as well as establishing distinctions between Japanese and Western literary modes and notions of the individual, thus will be neither a methodological point of departure nor an outcome in the present investigation of the subject and *shishôsetsu*. By way of Uno's and Tsushima's personal fiction, I suggest a re-reading of the self as portrayed in modern and contemporary Japanese *shishôsetsu*. By focusing on *writing of the body*, as the function of *shishôsetsu*, the present study also will allow for a thorough reconsideration of the *genre*, where the narrated body of *shishôsetsu* no longer need remain the specific, historically bound subject previously circumscribed by the notion of the modern Japanese subject and adopted by genre criticism. Through an overarching interest in this function of *shishôsetsu*, rather than in its specific forms, I challenge the different "universals" that have previously structured and limited our readings of the genre I-fiction.

Chapter One: Comparative Projects

Universals

Anyone with even the slightest knowledge of Japan is aware that group-centeredness has played an important role in the development of the country's political and economic life, and still figures prominently in all sectors of Japanese society.

Li Genan, "The Rise of the Individual in Japanese Society and Its Impact: Trends Running Counter to Traditional Groupism," 1997.

The cultural statement above is from only one of the latest of comparative —often less than ingenious— studies illustrating our continuing compulsion to describe both Japan's uniqueness and its place in a spectrum polarizing the individual against society or community. The remark that Japan is traditionally characterized by groupism echoes the impulse of a need to theorize Japan and its individuals as a specific homogenous cultural entity. However, when the reader is afforded the opportunity to understand an "other" cultural tradition in relation to one's own presumably homogenous tradition, whatever that is, and in one's own terms, there is an attendant risk of cultural essentialism.⁸ With this danger in mind, Edward W. Said's landmark study *Orientalism* (1978) is one of the earliest of the postcolonial tradition to address how the "East" essentially has been constructed by

⁸ For example, Earl Miner, in *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature* (1990), describes the Japanese literary tradition as lyrical and evocative versus the West's dramatic and narrative. In offering universal descriptions of cultural products, his study may be considered essentialist.

the “West.”⁹ Historically overdetermined with the West at the fore, Japanese and Western cultural comparisons often depend upon the by now overly familiar binaries Said and many postcolonial scholars, notably Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Robert Young, have questioned: West/East, masculine/feminine, individualism/groupism, narrative/lyrical, and culture/nature, etc.

Shishôsetsu offers us a particularly fascinating object of study precisely because the genre features the individual and difference. The interests of this genre are thus unequivocally contrary to the sort of cultural expectations generated by a comparison such as the one above. Attesting to the ongoing importance of the individual, moreover, *shishôsetsu* has been perhaps the most widely realized mode of writing in Japan throughout the twentieth century. If one assumes that the expression of individual experience is of less importance in Japan, not only are the politics of identity, the subject, and individual uniqueness completely erased. Also lost are the opportunities to see similarities between Japanese and all other literary expressions of the ordinary, unique self in autobiographical fiction. The present study investigates individual identity as foregrounded in *shishôsetsu* without recourse to these binaries. However, it is useful to look first at the comparative nature of studies that have prevailed in Western as well as Japanese treatments of personal writing.¹⁰

⁹ Said’s project nevertheless has its own infirmities: he formulates “the Orient” as well as “the West” in ambiguous yet totalizing and dichotomous terms. He also risks in part the suggestion of an inquiry that denounces or aspires to surpass its predecessors in a sort of Hegelian progression of history.

¹⁰ For example, Marilyn Jeanne Miller shows an interest in understanding classical Japanese literature in relation to the West. However, Miller implies more than strictly literary and structural similarities, but also cultural and historical parallels as well with her following equivalencies: *nikki* and autobiography, confession, or apology; *jirekishî*

Unlike other Asian countries, Japan was never colonized by the West in the Meiji era (1868-1912), strictly speaking. However, an imperialist cultural hierarchy was established by many Western and Japanese writers and critics valorizing and/or historically prioritizing European literature, culture, and philosophy in discussions of Japanese literature. Some critics would promulgate in reaction to this the oppositional discourse of Japanese uniqueness, or *nihonjinron*.¹¹ Others would find Japan's literature, and thus Japan, a step behind the West in the modernization process. Concepts of the emergence of the unique, modern Japanese subject as contrasted to the developed modern European individual also held particular relevance for comparative theories of the *shishôsetsu*. The *shishôsetsu* became a literary ground, in a sense, or a particular historical point of convergence where the identity of modern man in Japan, Japanese culture, and Japan's place in the world were at stake. As will be evident in comparative readings and criticism of modern Japanese literature and the modern Japanese subject, *shishôsetsu* eventually became both a sign and an icon of the individual in Japanese culture and national identity.

The Taishô era commonly designated as the period of emergence of the *shishôsetsu* has been described as an era of crisis.¹² After opening its ports to foreign trade in 1854

monogatari or memoir; *monogatari-nikki* and confessional novels or new non-fiction; *sôshi* and the notebook or personal essay miscellany; and *kashû nikki* and poetic manuals or *kikô* and lyrical autobiographical writing in the West. [*Nikki* may be loosely translated as diary, *jirekishî* as personal history, *monogatari* as tale, *sôshi* as personal storybook, *kashû* as collected poems, and *kikô* as travel accounts.]

¹¹ *Nihonjinron* would valorize the primary elements in these binaries as "Japanese": emotive versus intellectual; intuitive versus scientific; community versus individual; nature versus society; imitative versus creative, etc.

¹² cf. H.D. Harootunian and Bernard S. Silberman, eds. *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishô Democracy* (1974). See also Michael Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens: Mass Protest in Imperial*

and abolishing the feudal system beginning 1869,¹³ by 1919 Japan had become not only a major power in the Pacific but also had established a new bureaucracy and a fledgling democracy.¹⁴ The *genbun itchi* movement¹⁵ to integrate common spoken language into literary discourse and the classroom was also underway, and eventually led to the creation of a reformed national as well as literary language. Calls for legal and social reform, as well as political and individual liberalization, though countered by the enforcement of strict nationalistic education and state censorship, nonetheless contributed toward a realization of a new sense of individualism. Philosophical and other changes brought on by encounters with the West and Japan's mass industrialization, capitalism, and technological advance entailed vastly changed structural, material, economic, and social conditions in Taishô Japan. Liberating changes to the lives of women also occurred at this time, as will be examined in more detail in the next section. In sum, the cultural crises above can be seen to have centered generally on the conflict between the state and the individual and the rise of individual self-interest.

Japan (1990), Peter Duus, *Party Rivalry and Political Change in Taishô Japan* (1968); A. Morgan Young, *Japan in Recent Times 1912-1926* (1973), and Miriam Silverberg, *Changing Song: The Marxist Manifestoes of Nakano Shigeharu* (1990).

¹³ Other institutions formed or adopted from European models were numerous. They included: general conscription and the re-organization of the army; mandatory public schooling; the police; the press; the judicial system; the post office; the railways; public health and finance (the Yen currency modeled after the American system of coinage); the establishment of the Bank of Japan; and the abolition of pensions to Samurai. (cf. Harootunian 115)

¹⁴ The period between 1854 and 1911, roughly contemporaneous with the Meiji era or *Meiji Restoration*, is also called the *Age of Modernization*.

¹⁵ cf. Karatani, on *Genbun itchi* (45-54, 77).

Private activity and privatization emerge as new ideals we see foregrounded in the genre of the individual, *shishôsetsu*, as literature began to illustrate the concept of the private, emancipated individual worthy of self-reflection. In the general mood that their own real life and ordinary lived experience were worth recording, Western models taken up by turn-of-the-century Japanese authors of personal fiction and critics of the genre¹⁶ include Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Flaubert, Zola, Balzac, Ibsen and Rousseau.¹⁷ In an essay entitled *Ruso no Zange-chu ni miidashitaru jiko* (“The self discovered in Rousseau’s *Confessions*,” 1909), for example, one of the earliest Naturalist writers Tôson wrote that “the *Confessions*, which he had first read in an English translation in 1894 at the age of 22, had had a profound impact on him”(Suzuki 217). An influence seen everywhere, the opening passage of Tanizaki Jun’ichirô’s *Chijin no ai* (*Fool’s Love*, translated Naomi, 1924)¹⁸ directly echoes the *Confessions* (Suzuki 152), thus establishing his fiction as an

¹⁶ Some early theorists of the *shishôsetsu* include: Nakamura Murao, *Honkaku shôsetsu to shinkyô shôsetsu* “The Basic Novel and the Mental-state Novel”(Jan. 1924); Kume Masao, *Watakushi shôsetsu to shinkyô shôsetsu* “The I-novel and the Mental-state Novel”(Feb. 1925); Uno Koji, *Watakushi shôsetsu shiken* “Views on the I-novel”(Oct. 1925); the debate between Tanizaki and Akutagawa on Art, or “The Novel With/out Plots Debate” (c.1927); and Kobayashi Hideo, *Watakushi shôsetsu ron* “On the I-Novel”(May-Aug. 1935). Though the genre had been discussed earlier, according to Suzuki “it was not until 1924-25 that the term *watakushi shôsetsu* came to refer to ‘I-novel’ as a recognized literary category”(151).

¹⁷ Ishikawa Gian’s Japanese translation of Rousseau’s *Confessions* [1765-70] was available in 1912. Ikuta Chôkô and Osugi Sakae came out with a second translation in Japanese in 1925.

¹⁸ I also discuss Tanizaki’s novel *Naomi* in the context of a later discussion of Uno and the “new woman” and “modern girl” figures in Japanese literature as they relate to love and the fetishized “new woman.”

ironic acknowledgement of the widespread familiarity with Rousseau's sincere confession. Kobayashi Hideo, arguably the leading modern literary critic in Japan, also traces the interest in the modern individual and Japanese *shishôsetsu*'s beginnings back to Rousseau's *Confessions* and other European Naturalist texts when, in *Watakushi shôsetsu ron* (*On the I-novel*, May-Aug. 1935),¹⁹ he states that the I-novel "finds its originating source in the excesses of Rousseau's language"(67).

The individual presented in literature also realized widespread recognition in society. Natsume Sôseki's famous speech, "My Individualism"(1914), made in response to critics who attacked him as anti-nationalist, discusses the growing attraction of Western individualism in Japan after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 that now burgeoned on fetishization: "Attribute something—anything—to a Westerner, and people would follow it blindly"(33). Amid the general reification of Western individualism that seemed to be taking place, Sôseki's admonishment to students was that regarding issues of the ego, self-awareness, and self-assertion (38), they should practice responsibility toward the Japanese nation and restraint in pursuits of the self as he had learned. With this sense of individualism, however, it would become apparent how personal liberty and the private self being defined in society and reflected in literature of the period would also be defined in literature against Western influence.²⁰

¹⁹ These other European texts include *Werther*, *Obermann*, and *Adolphe*, which Kobayashi collectively describes as I-novels (181).

²⁰ It has been remarked also that "although individualism owed its beginnings to the 1880s and 1890s, about the time of the Russo-Japanese War it was beginning to reach the level of popular consciousness. What had been closely identified with art and literature was eventually expanded to include other, less lofty modes of activity and consciousness"(Harootunian 18).

The literary atmosphere of late Meiji and early Taishô not only showed a concern for the individual and his own everyday experience. It also recorded what was of concern to the individual in what was intended to be the most objective, truthful manner. Modes and themes of European Romantic, Naturalist, and Realist novelists, as well as aspects of European philosophy and conceptions of the modern individual, thus are said to have influenced the development of concepts of the individual as well as the development of the Japanese I-novel, Realism, and Naturalism in Japan. Though the names of the Japanese literary movements did not always designate the same thing as their Western counterparts, nor were they distinct, for the present study of *shishôsetsu* the Naturalist movement may be summarized as follows. The *shizenshugi* or Naturalist movement in modern Japanese literature is particularly intent on objective presentation. It is also a movement featuring the representation of an individual life and focusing on intimate personal experience, rather than featuring the scientific observation of life, an interest in heredity, and in the deterministic laws of causality said to characterize Western Naturalism. Thus late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century protagonists in modern Japanese literature were now ordinary individuals of everyday life rather than the elite and revered individuals featured in classical Japanese literature. In contrast to the exacting themes, rhetoric, and traditional forms of classical literature, events experienced by these characters in addition were narrated in an empirical manner that exhibited a faith in recorded observation similar to that of Western Realist and Naturalist literature. Moreover, the language used for this literature was that of common, spoken Japanese.

Differences and similarities between Western and Japanese literature were often the topic and critical point of departure of Japanese literary criticism of the twenties and thirties. Many discussions featured this comparative method as a critical strategy for defining *shishôsetsu*. Distinguishing between two distinct cultural forms of Naturalism in this manner, Kobayashi states: “People began to speak of *watakushi shôsetsu* only after our Naturalist movement had reached maturity”(68), when “the Naturalist movement in Japan

fostered a distinctive form of writing about the self”(70). Kobayashi indicates that *shishôsetsu* grew out of an indigenous Japanese Naturalism which borrowed only the techniques, rather than the essence, of French Naturalist fiction. Moreover, it lacked the intellectual content of European texts derived from the economic and social conditions of Europe. Specifically, he observes, “not only was our version of a modern bourgeois society too small-scale to nurture the ideology of positivism that supported European Naturalism, there were in addition too many old and outmoded kinds of fertilizer in the cultural ground here”(70).

Shishôsetsu is said to diverge from Western narrative modes not in its basic directness nor by its unadorned description of an author’s life, but because the Japanese literary, economic, and social climate was unlike that which gave rise to European narratives of the self. Kobayashi’s observation is not only a comment on the aesthetics of representation and the experience of the individual in modern Japanese personal texts. His study is also indicative of the theoretical impulse which would continue to guide definitions of the genre and that depends on a comparison of the modern individual in Japan’s own temporally unique cultural and economic atmosphere to the West.

Contrary to the general tendency of late-Meiji criticism toward the denigration of Japanese literature,²¹ Kobayashi’s critical work reflects a more general interest in establishing Japan’s unique identity. Theorized both in terms of its difference and in relation to the European novel and its development, Kobayashi’s narrative of the

²¹ This comparison occurred to the point where, when Ikuta Chôkô took up the “unusual” position in 1906 of simply discussing a Japanese novelist, he became “one of the first critics to deal with current Japanese literary production.” Apparently, “earlier critics had usually discussed only foreign writers, and if an occasion arose when comparisons were to be made between foreign and Japanese authors, it was in terms of pointing out the inadequacy of the Japanese”(Keene 552).

genealogy of *shishôsetsu* can be read as the intent to give shape and meaning to the “emergent” modern Japanese national literary canon. It also may be understood as the nascent definition of a specific national literary tradition and thus Japanese national identity in relation to European culture. In light of this tendency toward comparison, we can examine, in addition, the history of the theory of this genre of I-writing in Japan. Genre criticism has exhibited a sustained interest in defining a “Japanese” genre with a particular focus on the modern Taishô subject in relation to the West. *Shishôsetsu* literary criticism itself may be read as a sort of Japanese *bildungsroman* as it extends from its early, historically comparative interest in defining the modern subject. That is, as formulated by both Japanese and Western scholars who trace the development of the “I” and the I-novel genre from its historical genesis, a national, literary, collective, and cultural Japanese identity is also established historically through comparison with the West. The theory of the I-novel in Japan thus has carried on simultaneous functions: to isolate the subject, to define the genre and, at the same time, to capture an aspect of Japanese cultural identity. All these operations of theory may be seen to have an historically and culturally vested interest in defining what is unique to Japan, as will be investigated further in the final chapter of this study.

With regard to comparative studies, James A. Fujii also recognizes the impact of “the Western realist novel and its celebration of the concept of individualism (anchored in the workings of capitalism)” but cautions against the universalization of Western experience (16). “In the decades following the Meiji Restoration, fabulation of credible, individuated subjects was pursued according to the dictates of Western humanist constructions of the individuated self, *but the resulting works were neither similar nor dissimilar to their avowed models in some reductive, categorical way*”(1-2, italics mine). Fujii also warns: “Japanese literature will continue to be seen as distant and exotic or somehow deficient as long as nineteenth-century Western realist standards persist in dictating its literary worth”(2). In opposition to applying a universal description, implying

shared characteristics of all realist modes and concepts of individualism to be recognized by authors and readers regardless of period or condition, Fujii advocates a pluralistic way of reading the narrated subject in modern Japanese literature.²² He makes a case for examining the new individual subject as discursive rather than as more strictly historically and comparatively determined, as Kobayashi and others have done.

Fujii argues that the modern subject is “neither transcultural nor eternally given”(22) and asserts that to describe it as such is to “effectively suppress the cultural and historical circumstance of Japan within which writers such as Tôson [in *Hakai* (1906) *The Broken Commandment*] labored to narrate subject positions”(22). The individual modern subject could be seen to arise of particular historical circumstances, a locality which would be erased should one anachronistically view the subject. At the same time, Fujii proposes that the subject be understood within the discourse of the modern Japanese novel, as a subject both created and observed from within pertinent ideologies of Western/European and Eastern/Japanese culture and literary production. With a similar interest in the systems within which the modern subject arose, one that includes that of modern literary criticism, Karatani also opposes the modernizationist trajectory that would plot the development of the modern subject and Japanese literature as one step behind the West. Clearly, the unique circumstance of Taishô Japan, that gave rise to a particular way of conceiving and positioning the modern subject, must be acknowledged. But considering the prevalence of the genre *shishôsetsu*, the individual can be seen to have remained a strong signifier in Japanese culture, which gives rise to the issues surrounding the maintenance of a unique

²² Karatani’s discussion of the “I” in the modern Japanese novel and the modern Japanese subject is also sensitive to the ideological, linguistic, and historical climate that informs the subject and its critics, contrary to studies engineered through the common East-West and teleological comparative framework.

Japanese literary tradition and national and cultural identity based on historical comparison with Europe.

Throughout the present study, these sorts of universalist and comparatist aims of *shishôsetsu* criticism will be questioned, culminating in a re-examination of how the I-novel became structured as an important mode of reading in twentieth-century Japan as well as a cultural paradigm that helped define Japanese individual, national and cultural identity. Not only have studies of the genre been couched most generally in comparative terms, but also have incorporated a particular identity of a *Japanese* subject. Both pre- and post-World War II critical writing on *shishôsetsu*, by focusing on certain canonical writers of the genre, further situates only the modern *male* subject in this Japanese literary and cultural landscape. It will become increasingly apparent how the subject of *shishôsetsu*, moreover, has been construed by genre criticism as one of primarily male experience. That is, the generic classification of *shishôsetsu* that features the individual not only has collapsed the distinction between author and narrator as its central generic code. It also has done so differently depending on the gender of the author and as a result of patriarchal institutional biases. This has led to two separate equations that rely on gender, as will be addressed in the study of women's writing in the next chapter. I conduct the present study of Uno's and Tsushima's work with attention to how the male subject and his experience effectively are canonized by genre criticism's almost exclusive treatment of "serious" literature and the male subject. At issue throughout the ensuing study of *shishôsetsu*, therefore, are the power and knowledge relationships that are evident in the structuring and identification of difference, and the subject implicitly featured in *shishôsetsu* genre theory and genre definitions.

Outside the various ideologies present in the literary institution, the limited comparative approaches to the subject, and the historically over-invested theories of *shishôsetsu* lies an alternate route of analysis for *shishôsetsu*. Bhabha, one of the postcolonial theorists mentioned earlier, offers such an approach when he states that: "the

point of intervention should shift from the *identification* of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse”(*The Other Question*, 71; ital. his). Taking up Bhabha’s suggestion to understand the structuring of difference, it becomes less important to the present study of *shishôsetsu* to decide whether or not either groupism or individualism is characteristic of Japan. Of much greater significance here is how some universals have operated in discussions of *shishôsetsu* to identify a unique Japanese product that features a particular modern subject.

Western postcolonialist and feminist approaches, objecting to the totalizing and essentialist criteria often present in universalist criteria, are applicable to the current study of *shishôsetsu* as they help foreground the class, gender, historical, and ethno- or Eurocentric biases, implying relations of power and knowledge, lying sometimes unchallenged beneath cultural judgements. By studying *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*, a “coeval”²³ reading of the individual body portrayed in both modern and contemporary *shishôsetsu* is facilitated in the sense that attention is given to the subject, as

²³ The term “coeval” is a mode of ethnography designed to counter the discipline’s positivist forms of knowledge. A coeval study would situate the scientist within the time and place of that which he is studying in communicative, intersubjective co-temporality, as Johannes Fabian formulates in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. The opposite of the “coeval” or co-temporal study he favors is the allochronic discourse of cultural difference that is indicative of the “knower” claiming imperialistic ascendancy over the “known.” Conversely, the coeval study will help conceive of a culture as a whole, a system, or a configuration itself.

opposed to situating the subject within one's own preconceived interpretive paradigm. This reading would be characterized as one that does not treat the European model of the individual, the modern subject, and his literary manifestations as either the forerunner to, or the ideal to which, Japanese literature and culture aspired. Rather, specific instances of *shishôsetsu* could be studied without preconceptions as to their comparative historical priority. Further, the critical universals that have engaged specific dominant, totalizing readings of *shishôsetsu* to the neglect of *shishôsetsu*'s "other" voices or possible manifestations are exposed, as occurs through the recognition of the gendered subject in genre criticism. A result of questioning generic universals will be the appreciation of individual identity and experience for the *shishôsetsu* author, specifically those who do not participate in the cultural consensus imposed by dominant readings that have thus far treated *shishôsetsu*.

Shishôsetsu Genre Theory

Early essays by Nakamura Murao (1924), Kume Masao (1925), Satô Haruo (1927), and later Kobayashi Hideo (1935) begin the critical discourse on *watakushi shôsetsu* or *shishôsetsu*. They approach the *shinkyô shôsetsu* "mental attitude novel," the *honkaku shôsetsu* "authentic fiction," and the "I-novel" in various ways, though these terms emerge as roughly equivalent. There is general consensus among their work that the mental

attitude of the “I,” the narration of actual lived experience, the confessional intent, and the truth accessible through intimate exposure are central and defining characteristics of both the era and a new kind of writing. Set against European models of Realist and Naturalist fiction, and based on discussion of particular texts, their critical approaches yet left an ambiguous territory for readings of *shishôsetsu* based on the presence or absence of an authorial intent to confess. Though studies after theirs have differed as to descriptions of texts and discussions of operations present in the genre, later critics also sought to define *shishôsetsu* deductively by certain texts and their intrinsic features.

As will be evident also in a following study of confession, *shishôsetsu* often has been theorized deductively through genre precedents such as Katai’s *Futon* (*The Quilt*, 1907) and Chikamatsu Shûkô’s *Giwaku* (*Suspicion*, 1913) featuring a modern, private, emancipated individual worthy of self-reflection. The first- or third-person author is generally believed to narrate his experience with a varying degree of distance or faithfulness, requiring that readings form an equation between the narrated persona and the author. However, there exists a critical assumption of realist convention concerning both authority and referentiality, as well as authorial intention in a text, that guides current genre criticism and studies of modern Japanese literature and the narrating subject.

In a case that can be seen to parallel that of *shishôsetsu*, structuralist and deductive ways of looking at the genre autobiography, with its focus on the modern individual, characterize some of the earliest ways of theorizing personal narrative in the West. Autobiography has been described as a product of the rise of the modern individual subject since the Romantic period. Western studies that have attempted to isolate the genre autobiography by structuralist means have focused on this “I” of autobiography and have simultaneously demonstrated a compulsion on the part of readers and critics toward modernist projects involving veracity, verisimilitude, and the distinction between truth and fantasy. Two results have been the institutionalization of a belief in an author’s revelation

of concrete truths of his/her personal life in narrative, and a belief in forms of narrative authority.

Rousseau's *Confessions* is a genre precedent not only taken up by Japanese *shishôsetsu* writers and critiques, as mentioned, but is used also by Philippe Lejeune in *Le Pacte autobiographique* (1975) toward establishing his equation author=narrator=protagonist for autobiography. A brief look at Lejeune's theory will demonstrate its similarity to Japanese critical studies of *shishôsetsu*. Lejeune explores the equation of the protagonist with the author's name written on the flyleaf. This identity is central, further, to Lejeune's definition of autobiography as a "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality"(4). The belief in forms of authority, the idea of the integrated, unassailable individual presented in personal writing, and a strong faith in representation through realist fiction underlie Lejeune's structuralist approach to autobiography. However, these are ideas that are challenged again and again by feminist, poststructuralist, and even postmodernist theories of the individual and of narrative authority. It is this challenge, moreover, that is particularly relevant to critical approaches isolating the subject and the genre of early modern *shishôsetsu*.

Lejeune's structuralist equation is not unlike the approach Edward Fowler, in *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishôsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (1988), employs in his discussion of the intrinsic textual features of *shishôsetsu* as a modern first- or third-person narrative based on an author's experience. Importantly, Fowler also calls *shishôsetsu* the "rhetoric of confession" and adds that the "myth of sincerity is founded...on the illusion of authorial presence"(69). Despite this interest in rhetoric, Fowler nonetheless limits the applicability of his genre theory as he establishes the author=protagonist equivalence. Fowler bases his discussion on a select group of Taishô-era writers and texts, and, moreover, embeds modernist approaches to representation and the notion of absolute truth or meaning operative in confession by augmenting the function of the *bundan* in early

modern Japan. For the purpose of understanding Fowler's modernist implications, the *bundan* and its functions are sketched below.

The word *bundan*, typically describing an association of writers, was used by Tsubouchi Shōyō as early as 1889, and referred originally to the closely knit group of *Ken'yūsha* [*Friends of the Inkstone*] writers who surrounded Ozaki Kōyō (Keene 547). In addition to acting as mentor for other young writers, Kōyō “controlled the literary page of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and even exercised a veto power over what was published by two major houses, Shunyōdō and Hakubundō”(Keene 547). As another example pertinent to the present study, the association *Shirakaba-ha*, literally “White Birch Society,” was a group of writers, including Naturalist and *shishōsetsu* writers such as Tayama Katai, who formed a *bundan* around a magazine of the same name devoted to Taishō authors, readers, and critics.²⁴ Functioning as more than a discussion and publication group, however, a particular *bundan* could have the effect of acting as a critical literary gatekeeper, not only helping to establish trends via the writers and writing it promoted, but also in establishing the literary canon.

According to Fowler's study of *shishōsetsu*, and the equation between narrator and protagonist that forms an integral part of the *shishōsetsu* operation he studies, the *bundan* is also that group “which in the Taishō period referred specifically to that close alliance of writers, critics, and interested readers who had an emotional or intellectual stake in the equation between art and private life”(xxvi). That is, the literary circle knew the actual author, usually because the author was either well known already, or was part of the same *bundan*. Through this knowledge, his readers could confirm that the narrated experiences were, or were not, actual historical experiences. Fowler then elaborates on the “faith” of the *bundan*, and the writer's “faith” in his transcription, to indicate how the truth of the

²⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the *bundan*, see Fowler, *The Bundan*, in *Rhetoric of Confession* (128-45).

apparently objective, realist presentation proceeded unproblematically. “Given the *bundan*’s faith in the ability of the writer to apprehend and portray brute reality and to present himself without mediation, the distinctions between private person and narrating persona, between autobiography and fiction, lost their significance... [And conversely,] the writer saw his task as the faithful transcription of a reality there for all to see rather than the creation of one in need of illumination”(Fowler xxvi). The implication of Fowler’s study is, however, that the narrative is “made good” by the surrounding circle of *bundan* members who could confirm the general veracity of the *shishôsetsu* author’s narration because they knew the actual, physical author. In augmenting the role of the *bundan*, Fowler essentially likens their role to the veridical act of finding the author’s name on the flyleaf, as offered by Lejeune in his study of autobiography. That is, both cases cement the equation author=protagonist in the discovery of an actual author, assume his integrated, absolute authority in the narrative, and establish realist modes of verisimilitude as generic structures.

Significantly, the literary circle Fowler emphasizes in his approach to the actual author is not operative for some other marginalized early writers of the genre²⁵ nor even for some prominent early modern Japanese and Taishô writers.²⁶ Furthermore, in the

²⁵ Contemporary writers who were not part of the *bundan* include women writers, for example. Uno Chiyo, whose work and reception I examine in chapter three, is only one illustration.

²⁶ Though Fowler underscores the function of the *bundan* in Japanese literary society in relation to the I-novel, prominent writers of early twentieth century Japan who did not associate themselves with a *bundan* include Natsume Sôseki and Mori Ogai. Two Taishô writers considered authors of I-novel, namely Tanizaki Jun’ichirô (who wrote one I-novel) and Shiga Naoya (whose entire *oeuvre* is characterized as *shishôsetsu*), also did not belong to the *shishôsetsu bundan*. However, it is worth noting that these authors listed here were

interest of historical applicability, the function of the *bundan* in the Taishô era is generally divergent, dispersed, or absent for post- World War II writers and I-writing. Thus Fowler's critical approach to *shishôsetsu* not only limits itself to the treatment of certain writers, but is also inextricably linked to the modernist project of "truth"-finding, to the modern subject in early modern Japan, and to an author conceived as a unified, originary, authoritative source of truth. In the case of *shishôsetsu* generally and later, therefore, the absence of the sort of confirmation that Fowler reads on the part of the *bundan* invites consideration of a more general discursive ground both for finding the subject and for generic classification. Numerous other critics of modern literature would not put the emphasis Fowler has on the *bundan*. Furthermore, the operation of the *bundan* could be replaced largely and loosely by a reading of all media and discourse around the subject, forming a more nebulous yet productive ground on which to write and read the author=protagonist relation for both pre- and post-World War II *shishôsetsu*.

As a representation of individual experience *more or less* based on the author's actual life, the ambiguous area between fiction and truth in *shishôsetsu* thus remains a puzzle for realist prerogatives and objective mimesis. Such modernist projects also fail to address what are arguably widening fictional parameters of "realism" in recent literature of the self, which I look at specifically in Tsushima's writing and in the concluding chapters. As will be apparent over the course of this study, the intent to portray and to read an individual life can be seen to take place in a world of discourse. Isolating *shishôsetsu* depends therefore on the active role of the reader *and* writer who isolate the individual subject, and thereby isolate the genre *shishôsetsu*, within a discursive milieu that includes information on the author's actual life. Thus it is not the truth of the self's experience

affiliated with the Peers School from which groups of writers emerged, were themselves famous writers and had influenced a group of disciples, or were from the upper strata of society. As a result, these factors helped secure not only a kind of lifestyle amenable to writing but also ensured their public literary exposure.

which is at issue in this study: rather, it is the epistemologically different ways of achieving truths of the self, and the generally unasked question of the importance of isolating an absolute “truth” in the first place.

Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner, author of the most influential study of *shishôsetsu* to date, studies the I-novel as a “socio-psychological phenomenon”(6). She attempts to move away from defining the features of *shishôsetsu* for all its narratives, but nevertheless also proposes a structuralist model for *shishôsetsu* based largely on pre-World War II texts that may be generically characterized as factual, direct expressions of the author’s lived experience. Hijiya-Kirschner argues that “critical evaluation of the genre would only be possible based on an examination of numerous individual examples, each considered in relation to its own historical period...[such that] homologous structures in the ‘global semantic systems of the socio-cultural communication system’ become visible”(325). Despite attention to individual examples, Hijiya-Kirschner’s generic parameters are prescribed nonetheless by the examination of texts she assumes “belong” to the generic category *shishôsetsu* and that establish a certain generic code. That is, she ultimately “verifies the usefulness of her structural model”(6) by finding textual compliance with a sort of “horizon of expectations”²⁷ established for and by writers, critics and readers of *shishôsetsu*. This horizon is founded on intrinsic, identifiable features of specific, modern, and then historically delineated generic precedents.

The critic not only bases the genesis of her “horizon of expectations” on a narrow group of predominantly pre-World War II texts traditionally considered I-novel. Through her structuralist definition she also simultaneously effaces the discursive, political, and

²⁷ Hans Robert Jauss originally uses the phrase “horizon of collective expectations” in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982). Hijiya-Kirschner’s similar “horizon” is derived from the ideas of Schulte-Sasse and Werner. Lejeune also mentions a “horizon of expectations” in his description of generic classification of autobiography (141).

philosophical implications of historically changing ground against which the individual self is written and received. Contemporary subject creation and the differing intents of writers, readers, critics, and literary institutions guiding *shishôsetsu* production and reception thus begin to be found in an area beyond the “horizon” the critic proposes. Hijiya-Kirschnereit’s position thus also echoes the dominant motif of pre- and post-World War II literary criticism of *shishôsetsu*, that is, one anchored in realist and modernist assumptions and in early modern *shishôsetsu*.

Fowler’s and Hijiya-Kirschnereit’s approaches do not provide sufficiently flexible models for understanding either *shishôsetsu* produced throughout the twentieth century or its critical discourse. They treat in different ways the reader’s and the market’s complicity in the consumer contract of *shishôsetsu*, as well as the reader’s engagement with the subject presented by *shishôsetsu*. However, the texts they find identify the genre—even those texts most closely associated with realist and Naturalist writing in the modern era—can be seen to undergo a historical, technical, methodological, and thematic widening in *shishôsetsu* writing beyond its Realist/Naturalist parameters and beyond certain *critical* approaches to specific confessional *shishôsetsu* of the 1920s and 1930s, as I demonstrate in the next chapter. Japanese readers and critics of personal fiction have historically and rather unproblematically, it seems, identified biographical readings of semi-fictional texts, suggesting that the parameters supplied by intrinsic features are not always met by many possible texts of the genre.

To establish a horizon of expectations for the genre *shishôsetsu* is to create a generic scheme where form preceeds function. *Shishôsetsu* must be understood as a function of intent, that is, the intentional recognition of an identity equation between the author, narrator, and protagonist, thus isolating a text as *shishôsetsu* and effectively guaranteeing an(y) historically “true” reading s/he desires from an author’s *oeuvre*. *Shishôsetsu* is a genre whose only intrinsic feature should be the presence of a telling and read, material and discursive “I.” Contrary to the philological preoccupation or interest in

an Author, in what he or she was like, the genre *shishôsetsu* is generated by a “real” subject. But this subject also could be considered as one produced and read from and within surrounding biographical and fictional, cultural and political, gender, national, and historical discourse, as I examine during the course of this study. Many genre definitions do not sufficiently accommodate the subject nor the I-writing produced after World War II, though countless of these works in the latter half of the twentieth century have been considered *shishôsetsu*. This hermeneutic or interpretive area, where the categorization of *shishôsetsu* depends on the discursive interpretation of an “I” that is nonetheless a “real” body, is where a heuristic or discovery-oriented understanding of *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body* will be found most applicable.

Chapter Two: *Shishôsetsu* and Women Writers in Japan

Critical interest in the separate areas of autobiography, genre theory, feminist readings, and Japanese women's writing has been increasing since the 1970s. With the exception of Janice Brown's article, "Reconstructing the Female Subject: Japanese Women Writers and *Shishôsetsu*," however, no study has combined these fields to offer a thorough treatment of *shishôsetsu* authored throughout the twentieth century in Japan, particularly those by women. In addition to re-evaluating women's writing in Japan based on readings of Uno Chiyo's and Tsushima Yûko's subjects and *shishôsetsu*, the present study will supply a general re-definition of the genre *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*.

The Traditional Shishôsetsu Body

Il faut, malgré ma répugnance, que je parle de moi.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, preface to *Narcisse*, 1753

Tayama Katai's *Futon*, a *shishôsetsu* that tells the story of the author's unrequited love for a beautiful, young female pupil, is generally agreed to be among the fathers of this genre of intimate narrative.²⁸ Katai helps establish confession as a pattern of Japanese Naturalist

²⁸ Another father of the genre is Chikamatsu Shûkô with *Giwaku* (*Suspicion*, 1913), though Shimazaki Tôson's Naturalist fiction, *Hakai* (*The Broken Commandment*, 1906) is considered one of the genre's forerunners.

fiction featuring *heimen byôsha*, “flat” or “ordinary description,” even though Katai achieves his personal confession through the third-person protagonist “Tokio.” In the course of the narration, events and circumstances were/are generally understood to correspond to Katai’s actual life and person: his address, his marriage and children, his occupation, his interests and habits. All details, except the intimate disclosure, were publicly known to be true, especially by his literary cohorts in the *bundan*. With *Futon*, the author’s private emotional and psychological life was added to the personal discourse gathering around “Tayama Katai.” What was significant to Taishô scholars and readers unused to blatant personal confession was the frankness with which Katai narrated the personal. In the text, the author/protagonist describes his explicit, debilitating romantic interest in Yoshiko, and her choice to leave him for a younger man whom she loves, events that leave him, in the end, sobbing into her still-warm bedclothes.

Linked to the Naturalist movement in Japan, the growth of intimate, individual examinations of personal lives often took the form of confessional *shishôsetsu* such as Katai’s, exhibiting an interest in the personal previously unlicensed by a society now exploring increased personal, political, social, and literary liberalization. *Shishôsetsu* and its expression of the modern subject was not embraced wholeheartedly by literary and cultural critics, however, who desecrated the general “shameless pursuit of pleasure” becoming “rampant” in society and in the literary scene that flourished after the publication of *Futon*. Some Taishô critics “grieved over the expression of private interest and the total failure to link [personal] success to some higher sense of [social, political] responsibility.” Others anguished over “individualistic dissipation,” became disgusted with *shishôsetsu* authors’ “preoccupation with carnal desire,” and condemned the profligate “general celebration to luxury” given expression in writing (Harootunian 20).

Like Katai, *shishôsetsu* authors of modern Japan often chose the private body as their focus, treated topics of personal despair, disillusionment, and disbelief, and thus were said to “flaunt their egos, woes, and flaws in painstaking detail”(Wilson 296). An

individual who narrated common, even trivial, experience, and described how he related to these events, was even found to exhibit the idea that “what the individual does or thinks is without importance to others, and what is important to others is of no interest to them”(Harootunian 114).²⁹ As such authors of personal experience, Tayama Katai, Iwano Hômei, Chikamatsu Shûkô, Tokuda Shûsei, Kunikida Doppo, Shimamura Hôgetsu, Shiga Naoya, Kasai Zenzo, Shimazaki Tôson, Kikuchi Kan, and Dazai Osamu were often said to exhibit these traits. The celebration of the creative personality and the unmitigated exploration of self, versus an interest in public affairs, made *shishôsetsu* an exemplary cultural product of the ideas that widely impacted Japanese writers and society.³⁰ Despite this pursuit of this emancipated self and liberated creative personality, the individual portrayed in *shishôsetsu* began to be identified largely by literary and cultural critics as immoral, unethical, myopic, frivolous, indulgent and dissolute, thus framing a personality behind *shishôsetsu* who was rarely admirable and often socially unconscionable.

The idea of the private, carnal individual and the atmosphere of indulgence said to pervade Taishô culture, as narrated through the focus on the individual body in its excesses and own self-interest, thus became implicit in many ideas and definitions of *shishôsetsu*. Donald Keene, for one, remarks that “there is little agreement among the critics as to what constitutes an ‘I-novel’ or distinguishes it from other kinds of autobiography”(506). Nonetheless, he unequivocally states:

²⁹ For a more thorough discussion of the private *watakushi* and the public *ôyake*, see Harootunian (110-55).

³⁰ Implying a similarity between this individual and 18th c. notions of Western Romanticism, Harootunian insightfully remarks: “All heroes in Japan are romantic” in the sense that Japanese literature is “intimately associated with efforts to explicate the self”(154).

Regardless of how the term is defined, however, it is generally expected that an “I-novel” will not merely recount events that have occurred in the author’s life, but will expose them mercilessly in the manner of a confession. The early writers of autobiographical novels, perhaps because they could not shake off a Japanese reticence to allude to unseemly personal affairs, stopped short of full revelations, but many of the “I-novel” writers seem to have derived masochistic pleasure from disclosing not only their most contemptible actions but also shameful thoughts that never manifested themselves overtly. (506)³¹

That an author of *shishôsetsu* undertakes an indecent and merciless act of self-exposure, as opposed to a legitimate narration of diverse events in his life, seems a not uncommon assumption made of the masochistic labour of *shishôsetsu*. However, the critical interest demonstrated above, in describing the biological author’s motivation as well as his chosen narrative themes, is found implicit in many genre descriptions. Such genre descriptions continue to play on the idea of the abject, isolated and isolating, suffering author equated to a protagonist and promising brutal, often sexually related, revelation of the self.

Like many *shishôsetsu* critics, Keene describes the product of this authorial motivation in value-laden terms, specifically as the narration of the contemptible and shameful. Viewed in this manner, the author’s revelation becomes much more than the communication of personal events of a life. In this interpretation lies a kind of unacceptability of not only the subject matter but also of the individual, narratological and

³¹ Keene’s study includes discussion of the work of Mori Ogai, Tayama Katai, and Chikamatsu Shûko. He then lists: the I-novelists of the Naturalist tradition (Kasai Zenzô, Makino Shin-ichi, Uno Kôji, Kamura Isota); Shiga Naoya’s disciples and the *shinkyô shôsetsu* [mental attitude novel] (Amino Kiku, Takii Kôsaku, Ozaki Kazuo); as well as the poets of the I-novel (Kajii Motojirô, Kambayashi Akatsuki).

biological body generated and fleshed out amid tensions involving the “contemptible” individual and society. Self-exposure thus can be seen to occur in an area involving the writer, reader, and society, though Keene does not interrogate this further. His genre discussion includes only a general condemnation rather than a description of an authorial masochistic impulse, as well as the cursive yet denunciatory observance of the writers’ concentration on exploring the “inner significance of trivial events.” Either observation deeply implicates a reading of a certain personality of the author and text on the part of the critic. Defining *shishôsetsu* in this manner, Keene —as other critics of *shishôsetsu* have done— does not acknowledge his own construction of a specific sort of *shishôsetsu* product and a general authorial person based on field comprised of what seems a specific array of personal fiction.

Authorial intent to confess the difficult, dirty, or dismissable, as well as the number of times he or she does it, are made integral criteria, nevertheless, to Keene’s isolation of the genre and a general writer. Like other critical approaches, Keene’s definition ultimately reveals more about a *particular* critical/readerly reaction to, or critical re-production of, certain textual features rather than, as per his implication, demonstrating the existence of intrinsic, objectively isolated textual elements. His disdain for *shishôsetsu* writing and writers also underlies the comparison he makes between the genre and “truer” fiction, as “clearly of less immediate appeal than the out-and-out fiction of Nagai Kafû and Tanizaki Jun’ichirô...”(507). Inductively arising from particular generic precedents, Keene’s definition provides less than sure ground for defining or isolating all texts that could be considered *shishôsetsu*, though the description nonetheless echoes a prevalent theoretical impression employed by other *shishôsetsu* critics.

Though the present study will show that it is unnecessary to discuss *shishôsetsu* only in terms of the confessional mode, early *shishôsetsu* of the Taishô era, as well as genre criticism generally, can be seen to demonstrate an interest in narrated confession. Arima Tatsuo describes how the “[d]issection through the scientific method was replaced

in the end by the desire for the approximation of experience: confession. This was taken to be the essence of naturalism”(93), a remark echoed by Tomi Suzuki, whose study I examine at greater length in chapter five. Of utmost importance to reading confession here, even as the “approximation of experience,” is the understanding that confession carried with it an objective thrust similar to that of the science of Naturalism, namely in the sense that disclosure of the intimate or everyday would lead to the disclosure of truth. The link between sex, confession, and truth would be a relation that would continue to lie below the critical study of the self and the desire to confess, whether sexual or more general, of *shishôsetsu*. This historical preoccupation exhibited by genre criticism will be made apparent as we look at the narration of the self in Uno and Tsushima, particularly as their writing may not have to be read as confession.

In addition to recognizing the different modes and themes of personal revelation seen throughout the twentieth century, Karatani’s reinterpretation of modern literature is useful here as he discusses *shishôsetsu* and confession in discursive terms, rather than contributing to the institutionalization of confession as the historical result of European influence. Asking “Why did Katai’s *Quilt* create such a sensation?” Karatani affirms: “It was because ‘sexuality’ was written for the first time in this novel. It was the sexuality brought into existence by repression, a sexuality that had been unknown prior to that time in Japanese literature”(79). In this relatively direct observation, Karatani finds confession as a form of narration revealing truths of human experience that structured the individual in and against society. In only apparent contradiction, however, Karatani also attends to the social systems in which an author laboured, arguing that the “system of confession preceded the act of confessing”(78). According to Karatani’s further remarks, “[a]lthough Katai was seen as confessing what had been hidden, it was the reverse”(79) as Katai’s confession obviated that which was already in place, namely both the indigenous and

adopted systems in which the author/protagonist expressed his individual experience, and that included those systems of Christianity and the individualism of the West.³²

Karatani is unwilling to describe confession in *shishôsetsu* only in terms of comparative historical progress. He conducts an observation of reversal such as the above that attends to diverse systems and configurations in place in “modern” “Japanese” “literature.” That is, like the coeval point of departure advocated at the end of chapter one to address the problem of universals, Karatani’s approach will expressly counter the ideological relations that structure Japan and the West in a hegemony of cultural space and historical time. “Japan” in Karatani’s method is understood as an organic whole that incorporates both the other and itself spatially and temporally. He affirms the instances of confession in Japanese letters. However, he does not structure readings of confession as a series of contiguous relations with Japan a step behind the West.

This dialectic interactiveness translates to the relation between authority and the individual confession as follows.

When contemporary scholars of literature speak of the struggle of Meiji writers to establish a modern self, they merely confirm an ideology in which we are already thoroughly steeped. They set up an opposition between the state, or political power, and faithfulness to interiority, or the self, unaware that “interiority” is itself politics and that it is a manifestation of absolute authority. Those devoted to the state and those devoted to interiority complement each other. (Karatani 95)

³² Karatani’s position thus echoes Foucault’s idea of how the “pervert,” for example, is produced (comes into existence) in and through discursive constructions of the “pervert”(Foucault, *Knowledge and Power*).

With the above, Karatani understands the inter-relatedness, in fact, the co-incidence of interiority and external authority. Within the confession/repression system, there is no priority or existence of one without the other. Thus, as Karatani inverts notions of progress and history to look at modern Japanese literature, he establishes simultaneously the inextricable, inseparable link between the written confessing individual and the state. In Karatani's view, the operations of confession and repression function alongside each other, as opposed to both a rendering of the Japanese discovery of individualism as confession influenced only by the West and as more simply a repudiation of authority.

For the purposes of the present study, the power relation of confession and repression may be more generally described as the relation of individual difference. More specifically, it is precisely within this dialectic of norm/difference that the uniqueness of the *shishôsetsu* individual is generated and confirmed throughout modern and contemporary literature. This relational understanding of the many systems within which the individual is generated will be applicable to all *shishôsetsu*, not only modern Taishô era confession, as I will elucidate later. Moreover, without having to describe the genre *shishôsetsu* only in terms of confession based on early examples of the genre, *writing of the body* can be seen to continually feature this structuring of difference and the identity of the unique individual.

I will discuss further the theatrical nature of confession and masochistic self-disclosure with regard to repression and the subjective treatment of experience in chapter five. For our purposes here, preferable to reading the personal indulgence of the author in confession as reason for moral condemnation of the actual author, his character, and his chosen medium, the so-called indulgence of the individual could be understood as the repudiation of social conformism.³³ As such, the repudiation of authority may be seen to

³³Personal indulgence of the modern subject in literature and its political nature will be apparent also in the *new woman/modern girl* figure which I will define, contextualize, and

occur on many fronts and is not limited to the arena of sexual confession. Confronting, though not separate from, forms of authority in mass society, the corporate state, and public politics, the individual of *shishôsetsu* is presented, “confesses,” and is desired, received, and ultimately confirmed as difference. This relation of difference is most central to the understanding of *shishôsetsu* and the individual, as will be elaborated in a subsequent section “Daring Difference,” where “difference” is a position implicitly taken up by the person who writes of his or her private life because s/he structures her/himself in relation to the norm, forms of authority, and to society. As will be evident in readings of Uno’s and Tsushima’s subjects, the private topics that often involve the individual *body* in its physicality and private experience simultaneously engage social systems. That is, though treating one’s singular experience, *shishôsetsu* featuring the “I” is the narration of an individual written in/against society and is not removed from external conditions and the forms of authority that govern the body.

The modern Taishô valorization of personal experience could be seen to have given rise to the proletarian aesthete hero and to the subjective affirmation of this ordinary self. The wide-ranging appeal of the private life, as well as the intimate experience explored in narrative, is evident in the Taishô-era promotion, production, and distribution of the commodity *shishôsetsu*, and the public consumption of *shishôsetsu* and their authors’ lives. Indeed, the particular cultural marketplace of Taishô Japan, guided by members of the *bundan*, critics, readers, and writers of the genre, encouraged this sort of “rhetoric of confession”³⁴ based on the written and read body. The sincere expression of pain and pleasure, of personal, trivial, lived experience was at the fore, and there was a market for it.

examine in relation to women’s personal writing of the era, particularly Uno’s, and its reception.

³⁴ cf. Fowler’s *Rhetoric of Confession* (1988).

The cultural marketplace of Taishô Japan, then, signals our attention to the milieu within which early or traditional genre definitions of *shishôsetsu* were formed. The new, modern individual of *shishôsetsu* was simultaneously an ideal and a dismissable “dandy,” a vehicle of society’s collective desire for individual expression and its concomitant desire to suppress the trivial. Regardless of how the subject was viewed, exploration of the private advocated by expression of this modern, individual subject in literature can be seen to continue in all *shishôsetsu*. The interest in the author and self-exposure in narrative is thus present throughout the history of the genre. I will investigate through examination of Uno’s and Tsushima’s writing, therefore, how “although contemporary writers have turned away from confession in the narrow sense, it remains inherent in modern literary practice”(Karatani 87). Significantly, beyond reading the authorial impulse to expose him or her self, there is little consensus among approaches to the genre. However, in considering *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*, the individual subject and difference is confirmed.

Writing of the Body: A New Genre Definition

Since Aristotle, there seems no definitive answer to the question what does genre, or specific genres, “mean,” nor to the inquiry what do genres as a whole “do.” Although many approaches to genre have implied certain categorical and descriptive assumptions, the fallibility of descriptive and prescriptive genre theories is relevant to the study at hand. Certainly, structuralist, historical, and descriptive approaches have guided *shishôsetsu* criticism, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. The question whether or not genres are understood to possess a timeless underlying essence, or are subject to historical change, has been answered in different ways by twentieth-century schools and individuals including formalists, structuralists, poststructuralists, hermeneuticists, and reader-response

critics. Related particularly to the institutionalization of a unique, modern Japanese literary product, it is evident how genre categories of *shishôsetsu* have been used as an explanation of difference, as a deductive method of division, and as a praxis of historical comparison.

Recent genre theories that address these concerns include: Adena Rosmarin's pragmatic discussion of the "power of genre" as a tool of critical interpretation; Paul Hernadi's deployment of reception theory and his differentiation between genres through the varying effects on readers' minds; and Thomas O. Beebee's pragmatic approach to genre formulated in *The Ideology of Genre*, in which he discusses genre's "use-value" as well as the general market of literature and culture. These pragmatic analyses of genre can be seen to contribute to a function-oriented theory of literary genre which incorporates ways genre is put to use by readers, writers, the literary institution, the marketplace, and even the state. I will take up this function-oriented rather than formal approach in the present study of *shishôsetsu*. In addition to studying signs in the text, genre theory developed in this way also addresses how one or more of the text's codes will suggest (a) particular identifiable trait(s) which may enable the author, reader, or industry to choose whether or not a given text belongs to a genre. Of particular interest to the study of *shishôsetsu* is how this textual generic code should not necessarily be fixed, need not fully encompass certain characteristics or features, but will be produced in the communicative process and will enable the generic classification of a text. A particular generic classification, moreover, need not preclude participation in any other genre.³⁵

In light of this sort of genre theory and practice that seeks to provide an explanatory structure of analysis for generic *function*, rather than explication of any genre's specific *forms*, I propose to describe *shishôsetsu* as *shinpen no kakigoto* or *mi no mawari no kaku*. This definition of *shishôsetsu* indicates the action of the genre in its most general sense, as "writing of the body," or, "writing close to (or around) the body." This is the writing of

³⁵ cf. Derrida's observation in "The Law of Genre."

one's personal life. Allowing for categorical as well as for historical generic flexibility, a generic description focusing on the individual body will be able to treat the confessional body exposed in Taishô era *shishôsetsu*. However, it will not isolate theoretical discussion of the genre to these specific texts and certain exemplary modes of self-narration. Further, *writing of the body* is a genre description that is not unique to the writing of either men or women, though nevertheless incorporates the identity of the gendered individual subject. *Writing of the body* will allow, moreover, for the intentions of readers and critics, and even the writers themselves, to isolate an individual subject, thus enabling the categorization of texts as *shishôsetsu* based on the author's actual life presented and read in his/her fiction.

By discussing the genre *shishôsetsu* in the pragmatic, heuristic terms in line with the approach offered by Rosmarin in *The Power of Genre*, attention is given to the modes of writing and reading of *shishôsetsu* as explanatory rather than as explicative. Significantly, this discovery-based approach would not require possible *shishôsetsu* to fit a particular set of characteristics designated as indigenous or necessary to the genre. Genre identification thus would be a process, like the telling of the story in *Casablanca*, that does not yet know its end. Genre thus is here studied as a process, of "becoming," rather than of "being." *Writing of the body* will act therefore as a genre description with wider accommodation for the themes, modes, writing and reading of texts suggested by both autobiographical fiction and its reception featuring the modern and contemporary Japanese subject.³⁶ This heuristic approach to the genre will not only render unnecessary the isolation of specific criteria for membership within the genre, and a "horizon of expectations" of the genre based on certain historical generic precedents. It will also accommodate post-World War II literature in Japan which is generally considered *shishôsetsu* but which has not been adequately treated by definitions which focus on

³⁶ The genre conceived as *writing of the body* also may be considered "hermeneutic" in the way that it is interpretive or explanatory of the genre's function.

Taishô and early Shôwa literature, the modern historical subject, realist modes of narration, or strictly confessional/masochistic literature. *Shishôsetsu* conceived heuristically as *writing of the body* will more closely approximate, therefore, the general tendency in Japan by Japanese writers, readers, and critics alike to find certain fictions, by their intent, as a presentation of real experience and an actual author.

In addition to understanding the communicative system in which the *shishôsetsu* text is both produced, read, and which it engenders, one could also consider the materiality of the text beyond its own event. That is, a text could be considered a “concretization”³⁷ of the *shishôsetsu* genre, where its codes are virtual until the text is read and imaginatively “real”-ized, that is, concretized. This concretization would also occur within the materiality, the reality, of the text itself. Thus, the genre and its individual texts may be understood as a material presence in the library, literature course, or bookstalls. Because of this materiality, a discussion of the commodity/commodification and particular use of different texts is possible and indispensable to an understanding of the role which *shishôsetsu* will be seen to play, where texts are not only designated biographical but also come to define the Japanese national identity. As is apparent in this exploration of *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*, Butler’s psychoanalytic and feminist philosophy has informed the separate discussions of genre and identity. Uniting genre and identity is this discussion of *writing of the body*, I consider both the text and the subject as material as well as performative. More specifically, the present study of *shishôsetsu* is conducted with the understanding that genre identity is similar to gender identity in its “becoming” as it is performed or told, rather than “being” or possessing certain intrinsic and demonstrable features.

³⁷ This is an adoption of Wolfgang Iser’s approach to the realization of the text as outlined in his *The Act of Reading*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.

Considering the *authorial* subject in *writing of the body*, the body of the author of *shishôsetsu* could be understood to have a material presence, though its identity is also realized through performance. With regard to the corporeal body, as mentioned in the introduction, the body is one which is an emotional, psychological, actual, and gendered body as well as a physical body understood in relation to others and society. As such, whether a biological, essential, and physiological product, or a socio-cultural product, or indeed both, the gendered, real body is an important consideration of the present study because it is an integral part of the identity of the *shishôsetsu* subject. Finding a real, historical body behind *shishôsetsu* is necessary in order to isolate the genre that is about a real author's experience. As seen in the previous study of confessional writing, the most intimate disclosure of the individual through which the author hoped to capture truth often pertained to the body, to the sexual. The physical, gendered body inscribed in and by subsequent approaches to *shishôsetsu* will prove central to the study of Uno's and Tsushima's texts, their bodies, and my redefinition of the *shishôsetsu*. The study of women's writing in the next section will underline the significant role of the body in *shishôsetsu*, and both the physical body and a study of *shishôsetsu* will be brought together again in chapter five, "Re-Defining an Oxymoron" and *writing of the body*.

With the above, the body as material and physical is demonstrated, but the body can also be considered discursive in the sense that identity is produced. This approach to identity produced in writing and reading holds an important place in re-reading the unitary, authenticating identity often presumed for the individual, monistic narrator/author of autobiography. This is also where the unassailability of the "real," the authentic, the stable referent, transcendent meaning, objective mimesis, and, of course, the notion of the unified individual are challenged. Though a corporeal body so that autobiography may be read, the *shishôsetsu* self can be understood simultaneously as performed in writing, which does not require an historically present-and-unchanging referent. As outlined in the introduction, there are three inter-related components to the discursive body: one, the body produced

through successive and retrospective textual readings; two, the body understood in relation to society, where the unique identity of the author is structured as difference; and three, the body as produced in the textual interaction with the reader and the marketplace.

The first component of the discursive body, that is, the mutable subject or “I” in *shishôsetsu* narrative, indicates that the written subject may not necessarily be a completely coherent, definitive identity or subject through the texts which present it. The discursive subject is also not necessarily an historically, factually, or strictly “correct” narrative presentation of an author’s “actual” experience or identity. *Shishôsetsu* thus features a subject identity which is not necessarily presented as unified and concrete through successive writings and readings, though an identity trace of the author is the product of the intent of both author and reader of *shishôsetsu* to isolate an author figure. In this sense, like other contemporary *shishôsetsu* writing, both Uno’s and Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* will be shown to present the rich incalculability of fiction, identity creation, and retrospective narration in the representation of an “I.” Their personal narratives also will be shown to feature epistemological deferral, becoming texts of interpretive non-closure in a way that imitates the inevitable nature of writing of the self and the performance of the living body. Additionally, real experience may be discursively transcribed in texts without immediate recourse to an official family record or other “objective,” scientific criteria for isolating the identity of the actual author or truth, an otherwise prominent impulse of non-rhetorical realist approaches to *shishôsetsu*. The performativity of the “I” in autobiographical fictions can be understood therefore as a reiterative and citational practice by which the author’s self is produced in discourse.

The second component of the discursive body in *writing of the body* is that of a potentially transgressive self. Namely, the unique identity of the individual body is understood because it is told in relation to society, where society and its values are also displayed through the narrative. The body of *shishôsetsu* texts can be understood thus as a product of multi-voiced utterance, with the subject arising from within social and

individual, as well as narrative, discourse.³⁸ *Shishôsetsu* in this sense could also be considered “visible discursive spaces that give visibility to subjects”(Fujii 26) because the unique subject comes into being as the reader understands its difference through ideologies and the discourse around it. In this way, the emergent body understood discursively as self/other(s) underscores that *shishôsetsu* is a genre of personal autobiographical fiction: The genre is also about the validity of diverse human experience because the narrating body is positioned in relation to society, to others. Paradoxically, the genre can be seen to offer a large vision of society through the minute, detailed experience of a solitary self. Though often criticized for its narrow self-absorption, as seen in the way confessional fiction has been received, I will explicitly interrogate the narrating body of *shishôsetsu* as both social and political in this tension between private and public foregrounded by the genre.

The third component of the creation of the body/self in discourse is the relation of the narrated body to communication and language. The subject is the one “who speaks” or “who the narrator is”³⁹ as an effect and agent of discursive activity within and between *shishôsetsu*, as mentioned in the context of the first component of the discursive subject. But the speaking body is revealed also in relation to other discourse, that is, to the public discourse surrounding the text. The identity of the speaking voice or authorial body is made visible both to and by the reader engaged in discursive interaction with the *shishôsetsu* text. Considering this rhetorical aspect of authorial identity also helps illuminate how the subject of the text can be understood in non-positivist, performative

³⁸ cf. Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly the notion of heteroglossia, in *The Dialogic Imagination*.

³⁹ cf. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1985), and Gérard Genette, *Fiction and Diction* (1993) and *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1979).

terms. That is, because the author is both a speaking subject and a read “I,” the body emerges as a non-unitary identity.

It becomes apparent how, through understanding the material, historical nature of the body together with its discursive dimensions, we can discover authorial identity as the performance of the subject in *shishôsetsu*. This unstable subject of *shishôsetsu* is continuously constructed in and through language and text, as a *sujet en procès*, to use Kristeva’s terms (*Revolution* 90-93). This reconception of identity encourages an understanding of non-positivist notions of the self, as well as localized relations of difference which help compose shifting identity, and the relations involving the creation of identity in discourse and language. The “I” of *shishôsetsu* can be seen, rather than as a created object, as producing a subject, an enunciative “I” that produces and reproduces itself, and is produced in discourse.

In the context of considering this *shishôsetsu* subject, an alternative approach to the speaking subject would be to rigorously question narrative authority and to conceive of the subject as entirely discursive. This type of critical approach, similar to that offered by Roland Barthes, has sought to divide signified from signifier to ends such that there is no real “author” in the text, and the historical person is no longer the speaking subject of the narrative. In Barthes’s view, the speaking subject is displaced from its position in discourse as a figure that confers and authorizes meaning. But if one takes up his argument, even autobiographical works of literature would lack an author behind them and would be considered entirely a product of the literary institution, of discourse. In the approach I present here to the discursive and corporeal author of *shishôsetsu*, I do not renounce a quest for an author though I question the assumption of scientific objectivity formerly present in absolute and authoritative subject-centered discourse. A real author/subject identity is indispensable to *shishôsetsu* because the genre depends on the representation of the experience of an actual, historical author. At the same time, however, a non-

authoritative subject identity can be performed in the text and discourse, even while the subject identity is tied to a corporeal body.

By considering the speaking subject of *writing of the body* in this manner, moreover, I will not erase the political, class, gender, and cultural issues and values under siege in an economy of circulating discursive meaning because they are tied to a real body, to real experience. The voices of individual experience that are narrated in *writing of the body* are often invested heavily in identity concerns of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. In terms of individual, personal identity in *shishôsetsu*, then, the most dangerous elements of “death of the author” theories would be those that disengage and thus depoliticize signs of the body against a valueless background. By acknowledging the subject as both discursive *and* corporeal, therefore, autobiographical expression can achieve status as real transgression, individual expression, risk, personal exploration, and political protest against the dominant.

Even while considering this real body of the author in writing, Western poststructuralist and feminist theoretical approaches also enable escape from the strict binds of realism, representation, and identity in narrative. This is accomplished by recognizing that the narrative of authorial authenticity is ideological, rhetorical, and discursive.⁴⁰ Traditional “universal” approaches to autobiography, like that of Lejeune, for example, as well as Taishô and modern Japanese theory of *shishôsetsu*, both have exhibited an inherent need to isolate a “Subject” (authoritative, male) versus a “subject” (discursive body, speaking voice) in order to authenticate autobiographical production. Conceiving of subjects also “as narrative, discursive *effects* rather than as essentialized

⁴⁰ This is done in studies of modern Japanese literature only in recent work by Fowler, though only in part, in his analysis of *The Rhetoric of Confession*, more thoroughly by Fujii in *Complicit Fictions*, and most extensively by Suzuki in *Narrating the Self*.

subjects”(Fujii 12), however, helps us identify the *shishôsetsu* subject as one made in language and within ideological systems.

It is for this purpose of investigating ideological systems that Karatani offers his radical reconceptualization of “Japanese modern literature”⁴¹ in terms of a *linguistic* landscape through which the subject finds its voice. He defamiliarizes the terms of “modern Japanese literature” and the “modern Japanese subject” that are elsewhere understood in relation to the West by pointing out, for example, the importance of the *genbun itchi* movement, that is, the unification of spoken and written language gradually occurring post-1868. In Karatani’s understanding of modern Japanese literature, he “does not wish to freeze time and render it motionless; [rather,] with Foucault, he would simply ‘suspend the theme that succession is absolute’ in order to bring into view the historically specific discursive formation which is modernity. It is such a landscape, or discursive space, which produces ‘modern Japanese literature’”(de Bary 599). This “discursive formation” is the co-existence of specific modalities that produce “modern Japanese literature.” In addition, these systems composed of the ideological, social, linguistic, and confessional systems of early twentieth-century Japanese society also enable *shishôsetsu*. That is, the discursive systems together form the possibility of the notion of the modern subject. However, what is crucial to this rendering is that the modern subject is a product of this multiply discursive “landscape,” to use Karatani’s term, and is not understood as an isolated cultural object historically generated in opposition to the West. More generally then, his study highlights how *interpretations* of the subject can be seen to reflect specific

⁴¹ I use quotations here for presenting “Japanese modern literature” in keeping with Karatani’s defamiliarization of the terms. He not only isolates “Japanese,” “modern,” and “literature,” but also “origin,” and “the state” in order to show how they are all ideological constructs. See de Bary, “*Karatani Kôjin’s* Origins of Modern Japanese Literature” (1988) for her discussion of the inversions employed by Karatani.

and ideological discourses, such as that of Japanese modernity in opposition to the West. By attention to these sort of discursive formations, moreover, it becomes possible to understand the subject not only as a material, historical being but also as a body discursively formed. In addition, it is also possible to re-read the hegemonies implied in other critical approaches to *shishôsetsu*, as well as in critical conceptions of the unified modern subject and the authoritative, individual author/identity.

Of further consideration in the context of the discursive nature of the body of *shishôsetsu*, and involving Japanese language itself, linguists have pointed out that the nature of Japanese is such that there is a certain fluidity between speaking voice(s), with shifts made possible between first- and third-person.⁴² The pronoun *jibun*, translated as either “I” or “oneself” but which can be understood also as “him/herself,” is often found in *shishôsetsu* written in both first- or third-person.⁴³ Hijiya-Kirschner also distinguishes between a reading of the “I” in “I-novel” as *shi*, as opposed to *watakushi*, so that the former reading will allow for “less emphasis on first-person narration indicating, on a more abstract level, the central author-hero of the novel”(2).

In this linguistic/narrative context of the first or third-person “I,” Suzuki makes the ironic remark that “[t]he I-novel was considered a single-voiced, faithful record and reproduction of the author’s lived, personal experience, but many of the texts defined by I-novel discourse as typical I-novels—such as Tayama Katai’s *Futon*, Shimazaki Tôson’s

⁴² cf. Kuroda, “The (W)hole of the Doughnut”(1979).

⁴³ On this point, Fowler remarks that “the first-person/third-person distinction being negligible in Japanese”(238), “the question of narrative person is not the simple, straightforward one it appears to be in English”(171). Nor is it, I add, problematic despite the fact that “the use of *jibun* as a subjective as well as a reflexive pronoun, moreover...makes possible —indeed inevitable— a blurring of boundaries between first and third person that is literally unthinkable in English”(Fowler 171).

Haru (Spring, 1908), and Shiga Naoya's *An'ya kôro* (A dark night's passing, 1921-37)—are actually narrated in the third person”(5). It is apparent there is a certain fluidity in subject enunciation involving first-person or third-person narrative that can be read, either way, as autobiographical, making it possible to arrive, by either person, at the convictions of the author or her experience anterior to the text.

In different ways, then, Fowler and Hijiya-Kirshner note the linguistic possibilities of autobiographical writing in Japanese while demonstrating the intimacy of the linguistic/discursive context of exchange involving individual utterance and the subject. The potential for third-person autobiography is not, however, unique to Japanese literature: Lejeune has discussed the possibility of third-person autobiography in Western literature as well (35-45). Elsewhere, the narrative positioning of the speaking subject of *shishôsetsu* has been likened to the French *style indirect libre* which features both first- and third-person modes of narration.⁴⁴ Regardless of the speaking voice or whether or not the Japanese context is unique, it is remarkable that in either first- or third-person, *shishôsetsu* is an exploration of “true” experience that is at the same time “unauthentic or untruthful insofar as they include the suggestion that the new experience-construct is somehow natural or the same as ordinary or everyday viewing or experiencing”(Jameson 118-19). In either person, therefore, *shishôsetsu* is “unnatural” in that it is a re-creation of everyday experience. It is thus increasingly appropriate to discuss the genre and the subject within the terms of discursive exchange, where either third or first-person is isolated as the subject.

⁴⁴ Regarding modes of narration, however, Ann Banfield indicates in *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (1982) that the sentence structure of *style indirect libre* can only be found in written and printed narrative rather than in spoken sentences, so that no subject has ever known what has been expressed as his/her own experience or has ever witnessed it.

Shishôsetsu does not demand the reader's deconstruction of his/her choice to accept the authorial/narrative conceit present in *shishôsetsu* that is loosely thought to be the author's narration of actual experience. Precisely by attending to this discursive creation of the self in narrative, this study focuses on the *intent* of both writer and receiver to designate *shishôsetsu*. With this intentional focus comes the unequivocal indication that a realist or modernist interest in objectively presented truth may not necessarily suffice as a crux upon which to decide the generic fate of a *shishôsetsu* text. What *shishôsetsu* written in the first- or third-person demands, however, is an understanding of the production, marketing, and consumption of the subject as real identity and the text as autobiographical fiction. The "real" truthful experience of an individual is a reading that is fictionally and naturally presented, but is one, moreover, made possible through the reader's and writer's interest in loosely relating events as those experienced by the author = narrator = protagonist. It is not the object of the present study, therefore, to distinguish the operation of discourse in *shishôsetsu* as opposed to that of the Western mimetic tradition, other autobiographical counterparts, or modernist narrative. The examination here focuses, rather, on the relational, discursive nature of the writing and reading of the first- or third-person subject of *shishôsetsu*. It is in this understanding of *writing of the body* that enunciation of the "real" self can be seen to take place "not in an abstract space but in a particular speaker-listener relationship, even when the listener is only implied" (Suzuki 180).

In a related discussion of the discursive subject, some feminist theorists and theorists of autobiography have delineated a particular kind of constructed subject, language, writing, and mode of presentation as particular to women's writing. This is one where the narrated subject is understood as a fragmented "I" not in isolation but rather as a

subject-in-relation, that is, within the context of relationships to other individuals.⁴⁵ For the purposes of the present study of *shishôsetsu*, I argue that any gendered subject is discursive. Further, any discursive subject is constructed and read relationally within a social, political, linguistic, and historical, as well as biological milieu that is never outside hierarchic structuring. Whether or not the individual is a member of the dominant, or other form of authority, male or female the subject of *shishôsetsu* will write of their experience and will structure, regardless of narrated and implicit relations to others, their experience as unique.⁴⁶

As “other,” the tendency toward conceiving an “I” in relation to others is said to be present in many women’s texts. But, as seen in *shishôsetsu* generally, any unique body is understood also in relation to the norm. These norms include normative society, gender-specific behavior, and expectations of the individual expressed by any number of forms of authority. The real experience of an individual is therefore that of a material body that is at the same time a receptacle of discourse, the “physical receiver/performer of all the abstract policies made by [patriarchal] institutions” (Orbaugh 124). Again it becomes apparent how, as much as autobiographical fiction is the narration of private experience, the *shishôsetsu* subject is both a material body and a discursive identity that is understood as unique because it is in implicit or explicit opposition to the collective, to other bodies. Even a specific instance of the modern Taishô subject such as Katai’s *Tokio* is more than simply a cultural sign. The subject is a real, physical, subversive or transgressive body narrated

⁴⁵ In passim Brodski and Schenck, *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women’s Autobiography* (1988), as well as Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women’s Writing: From Antiquity to Present* (1986).

⁴⁶ Moreover, participation within the dominant at any time does not guarantee historical fixity: likewise, one can be structured in differing relations with any number of criteria establishing the norm or dominant.

against and within the background of society and performed within the strictures of potentially repressive social and institutionalized norms.

Joining the bio-political or corporeal body of the author and the discursive formation of the body, Orbaugh asks a question that helps illuminate and finally install together the operations of discourse and the body with attention to the act of writing. “How, then, does literature, how do specific writers, appropriate and use all these ‘discourses of the body’: the abstract, the physical and experiential, the linguistic, the psychoanalytic, the cultural, the erotic, and so on?”(120) Her response is applicable to Uno’s and Tsushima’s writing, as well as to women’s and *shishôsetsu* writing and genre criticism. “It seems to me that writers seize on specific pieces of this wild conglomeration because of their own particular social and political circumstances, and because of their desire to answer the particular strategic needs of their time and place”(120-21). As will be apparent in the following study of two women writers, the way writers seize on particular discourses of the body is a reflection of the body’s historical experience, but also of the body’s imaginative, psychological, and emotional experience. In *shishôsetsu* particularly, the body is also structured as difference, thus *writing of the body* can be considered a response to certain and specific forms of authority. I would add, moreover, that it is not only writers, but readers and critics, too, who interpret certain discourses of the *shishôsetsu* body pertinent to the needs they address within certain social and political configurations. The gendered, female body studied here in Uno’s and Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* thus will help make readers particularly aware of the ways the individual is structured in relation to society, and will also demonstrate the self-conscious awareness of the author writing of her body and its position in society. As writers and readers, we seize on particular pieces of discourses of the body in order to address specific personal, historical, social, philosophical, or political concerns. We also highlight certain discourses of the body in order to pose questions or suggest possibilities through different renderings of the body of *shishôsetsu*.

Daring Difference

If the function of *shishôsetsu* may be described as *writing of the body*, then the genre's most basic relation may be described as that of *difference*. The present study incorporates a number of aspects of difference, all of which pertain to the narrated and read *shishôsetsu* body. These differences include, firstly, the notion of identity. Identity can be construed as a structuring of oppositions in what I would call a Derridean-based notion of identity, of trace and difference. Specifically, identity is found as a trace (here not divorced from the real, gendered body) that is elaborated, in a sense, by a continuous, infinite, and transformative selection of dialectic choices or circumstance that mark the biological body "a" or "b", black or white, and contribute to its identity.

Secondly, there are the tensions between this self and society even as the autobiographical and real subject sets itself apart from the rest. Most basically, as a unique individual, she/he is unlike or different from the norm. Thus, her/his narration will inevitably place the subject within a tension with the social, even despite some authors' verbalized interest in the most introverted and self-absorbed generic forms. Further, another aspect of this difference will be read in the relations of power that the individual subject will negotiate in its public narration, which will find, therefore, the subject unacceptable or exemplary as the reader or critic structures the presentation of identity from the *shishôsetsu* text. Thus there are three aspects of difference that I expressly treat here; namely, that of the differences related to identity, to the self in the world, and of the self and the cultural and literary institution. Bringing these aspects of difference together, it is apparent thus how the presentation of difference in *shishôsetsu* operates in terms of the normative politics of society. That is, in the interest of presenting/reading the individual and his or her unique experience, all parties related to the production and reception of the text are conscious of how the particular individual is different, is "Other." The normative

politics of society, for example, will therefore pertain to behavior extending through gender roles. These will be more fully elaborated in the ensuing study of Uno's, Tsushima's, and women's writing, but briefly can be shown to include the notions of "good wife, wise mother" and the clash of individual authors against particular gendered and social expectations. *Shishôsetsu* and social politics will also be interrogated further in the section below, "Why Women's Writing," as will be the critical reception of women's writing as "Other" and in opposition to that of men's.

To continue with the study of *shishôsetsu*, that is self-revelation, or self-disclosure, as a relation of difference, the genre *shishôsetsu* is itself "difference" as a genre condemned and canonized for its explorations of individual experience. As I will explore again in my final chapters, the genre was itself used to disparate and distinct ends. On one hand, the Taishô era interest in Naturalism and in exposing the intimate is said often to have given rise to confessions often involving considerations of sex, with writers exposing "dark, ugly, sexual reality."⁴⁷ Evaluated in this way, *shishôsetsu* is seen as more than providing intimate insight into an imagined actual life via apparently objective narration. This evaluation of the limited impact, political importance, or "use" of these personal texts here is construed narrowly as unmitigated self-indulgence. Elsewhere, on the other hand, we find the critical interest in defining the genre as "Japanese," and, in this way, reifying or at least acknowledging the exploration of the individual in *shishôsetsu*. This latter critical appraisal marks the genre as a field on which notions of Japanese versus Western identity are enacted, which is a significant structuring of difference that will be examined further in my last chapter.

Regardless of the ends the genre has been put to critically, in considering the individual, male or female, modern or contemporary, the individual body written

⁴⁷ cf. Suzuki, specifically her chapter "Love, Sexuality, and Nature" (69-92), whose remarks will also be part of the study of sex and love featured in chapter five.

against/within the social body must remain an integral consideration of the genre *shishôsetsu*. Whether men's or women's autobiographical fiction, *shishôsetsu* is a genre that demands consideration for its relation of difference. *Shishôsetsu* is the individual engaged in and risking his or her own narration. Within the public/private relationship, writing of one's unique experience for the public can be considered a theatrical demonstration of, as well as a real, risk and revelation for the individual who narrates her/his own experience and the reader who receives it. The public/private tension by which the *shishôsetsu* self is realized is generated by this positioning of the potentially and politically *transgressive* identity both within and against society, and within social discourse. The *shishôsetsu* self is of interest because he/she is unique, at once a part of society and a subject written against it.

The desire, then, expressed on the part of the reading public or the marketplace for the body of *shishôsetsu* is the desire for the Other; it is its lack. Writ large, the social nature of the desire for personal narration, that is the expression of "a shared relationship toward a Thing" (Slavoj Žižek),⁴⁸ is echoed as well in *shishôsetsu* theory and criticism. Genre criticism, by accepting or ignoring certain I-writing, and thus, by extension, embracing or neglecting certain subjects, has reflected specific social, political, and ideological concerns which belie a collective desire for "intelligibly"⁴⁹ transgressive others. The omission, for example, of certain other bodies from *shishôsetsu* critical discourse speaks to the more general political economy within which a certain subject exists, is generated in literature and is read. To note, the subject or discursive body of the text is thus not only a creation of

⁴⁸ Žižek refers to enjoyment on a social field in his Lacan-inspired discussion "Eastern Europe's Republics of Gilead." *New Left Review*, 183 (Sept Oct 1990): 51.

⁴⁹ The notion of "intelligibility" is derived from Butler's discussion of cultural intelligibility and compulsory heterosexuality that speak to the forms of gender identity that are culturally and socially acceptable.

an isolated individual author: it is also partly a social construct arising from within society and reflecting its values and is evaluated, marginalized or favoured by social institutions.

These aspects of difference of the subject may be more readily apparent from the point of view of *reading* and criticism of the body. From the perspective of *writing* the body, the narration itself may also reflect how the speaking subject also might discursively construe itself as a viewed “object” and as difference. Namely, the speaking subject could reflect how the presented “I” considers itself an object in the social economy as, for example, a “woman,” or, perhaps, an incomprehensible, socially abject “idiot.” This interpolated positioning of the literary subject as object and as other will be interrogated in the examination of Uno’s personal mirror-writing and reflected feminine images of her “self” that, in turn, reflect the social gaze inscribed on her self. The subject narrating itself as an object will be made apparent in Tsushima’s writing in her interest in articulating society’s “incomprehensible” voices that simultaneously reveal the knowledge that they are unheard. They are the silent voices, the voices outside that which has been called elsewhere by feminist theorists such as Kristeva, the Lacanian Symbolic, language, and the Law of the Father. These voices include the voices of women, the social outcast, the mentally handicapped, the raver, the dreamer, and the “failed” female.

Orbaugh’s reading of the object of the gaze is worth noting on this point, namely, of the dominant in the social economy reading the “other,” and the subject’s knowledge of being read and of taking up the position as “other.”

When we talk about the experience of the “self,” it is most common to think in terms of experiencing oneself as “subject.” But it is also possible to experience oneself as “object,” for example as the permanent object of the gaze of the dominant other. Women in a patriarchal social economy constantly experience

themselves as objects of the gaze, the speech, the judgments, the violence of men.
(122)⁵⁰

Negotiating subject construction through various areas of social discourse, *shishôsetsu*, as an author's *writing of the body*, reflects how the represented individual is also conscious of becoming an identity-object generated within and against society. The subjects presented in Uno's and Tsushima's *shishôsetsu*, however, not only reflect how they experience themselves interpolated as *female* or patriarchal objects, but also are interpolated, in a sense, in their subject construction more generally as *individuals* and objects in the social economy. Sharing this in common with other *shishôsetsu* authors, the writing of both Uno and Tsushima inevitably displays a public awareness of life. They write their individual lives not only for the public but also self-consciously with the public in mind, constantly highlighting the tensions developed as difference between the narrated individual and its social milieu.

As much as *shishôsetsu* is a narrative of an individual, therefore, it is an implied narrative of experienced political, economic, and social mores, as well as forms of institutionalized authority. Joining, now, two previous discussions of confessional fiction and the authorial body understood as both material and discursive, to the relation of difference in *shishôsetsu*, I also re-examine the remark that "the modern Japanese literary tradition has been dominated by confessional male authors, who flaunted their egos, woes, and flaws in painstaking detail" (Wilson 296). This is not an unusual observation either of

⁵⁰ Orbaugh continues: "In the same way, although it is most common to think in terms of performing an act, it is possible to "perform" passivity. Rather than gazing, women can perform blindness; rather than speaking, women can perform silence; rather than judging, women can perform non-discrimination; rather than killing, women can commit suicide" (122).

the *shishôsetsu* tradition or of modern Japanese literature, particularly in the early part of the century. What is remarkable is that a discussion of *shishôsetsu*, that is dependent on an actual authorial body and which structures the individual as difference, should be largely generically construed as a male body. The omission of women authors from the literary canon of *shishôsetsu*, though the genre features the private, the individual, and everyday personal experience, is particularly conspicuous in the early half of this century that saw also the stirrings of a modern feminist movement. In this way, again, the subject of *shishôsetsu* is also discursively related to ideology. Implicit in the generic reception of women's writing, writing of the modern subject and difference, for the literary/critical institution, has been almost exclusively male. As will be studied in the next section, women's writing often has been designated first by the term *joryû bungaku* or "women's writing." The literary canon thus has demonstrated the deployment of the two equations mentioned earlier, namely, male writers=individual self=*shishôsetsu*, as opposed to female writers=(women's) experience= *women's writing*, in the genre categorization of *shishôsetsu*. This type of global categorization again raises some of the issues brought forward in chapter one, specifically those issues pertaining to universals and the reading/writing of *shishôsetsu*. Employing terms of Western comparative paradigms, notions of the modern individual, Japanese identity, or terms of Japan's own modernizationist progress, particularly that involving specific instances of "largely male"(Fujii xiv) subjects and their personal exploration of experience, come at the expense of studying the function and many actual instances of *shishôsetsu*. These are, namely, *shishôsetsu*'s inherent "others." The goal of the present exploration of universals is therefore also to study the diversity of an apparently homogenous genre category labeled *shishôsetsu*.

Before pursuing women's writing, I would like to mention that I do not argue here whether or not specific features are intrinsic to all women's writing, nor whether or not certain features of the representation of the individual are present in all Japanese texts. The

two authors I have chosen for the present study, Uno and Tsushima, in their respective ways have identified their selves in relation to others, and have marked their subjectivities in relation to male characters. However, I do not regard this as a categorical imperative but rather as an expression of women's *shishôsetsu* and a mode of expression of the concrete reality of each of the *shishôsetsu* authors. While acknowledging the common experience women may generally know through their bodies and the "legal and moral abstractions [that are] made out of the body" (Orbaugh 124) of woman, I hope, rather, to focus on their presentation of an individual and to examine each woman's writing in relation to dominant literary and political institutions which have legitimated and reproduced the master narratives of *shishôsetsu* in Japan. Uno and Tsushima can be seen to challenge patriarchal institutions from their common position as women, as both portray the individual body in writing which is a gendered, female body of experience, even while these two writers share little in terms of personal politics, literary style, and even critical acclaim. Attention to these gendered bodies of fictional autobiography will serve to highlight marginalized or transgressive "I's," the dangerous bodies which prove both a challenge to definitions of the I-novel and the diversity of an apparently homogenous genre category labeled *shishôsetsu*.

Why Women's Writing?

The various properties mentioned of the "I" or body of *shishôsetsu* as discursive and performative are brought together most productively in an investigation of the material and individual subject, gender, and literary reception. The approach *writing of the body* developed at an earlier point and applied to women's writing below will not only enable an understanding of the limits of certain constructions of the modern Japanese subject of *shishôsetsu*, but also will allow for the recognition of *writing of the body* as that of a real, articulating, individual subject.

The sketch of Taishô Japan offered earlier indicated some of the social and historical crises within which the *shishôsetsu* is said to have arisen with its focus on the private, modern individual. Considering women's growing sphere of economic, political, and literary roles at this same time, as well as an emergent social, feminist consciousness, the absence of women's personal narrative from canonical discourse on the *shishôsetsu* engendered in this turbulent political and philosophical climate is remarkable. Though some women wrote personal texts and *shishôsetsu* in deliberate response to liberating social conditions and the patriarchal literary institution, women's writing of personal experience is marginalized out of theories of the presumably democratic genre *shishôsetsu* that purportedly advocates interest in the ordinary individual. This separation extends even to the isolation of contemporary Japanese women's writing as a separate category. As will be explored in this section, the institutional classification of *shishôsetsu* can be seen to collapse the distinction between author and narrator differently depending on the gender of the author, forming two separate generic equations: male writers=individual self=*shishôsetsu*, and female writers=(women's) experience= *women's writing*.

There is a paucity of analyses of *shishôsetsu* texts by women authors even in recent studies,⁵¹ which is historically traceable to the women authors of *shishôsetsu* who have been excluded generally from the critical *grand récit* of Japanese literature. Though critics

⁵¹ Hijiya-Kirschnereit includes one woman author in her study, Hayashi Fumiko, whose *Hôrôki* (*Travels of a Vagabond*, 1928-30) she discusses in primarily biographical rather than explicitly critical, generically invested terms; Fowler does not treat any women authors in detail; Keene mentions only one modern Japanese female author, Amino Kiku; Fujii treats "marginalization" in "other ways," as he states, while acknowledging women's "exclusion from the *grand récit* of the modern Japanese prose narrative and the gendered construction of its central concept —the (largely male) subject"(xiv).

such as Fowler, Hijiya-Kirschner,⁵² and Fujii have noted women's absence from the *bundan* and the institutionalized literary scene, only Janice Brown's study, among very few others, begins to interrogate narratives of Japanese literary history and the meta-narrative of literary anthologies. These canons do not account for the voices of marginalized writers outside the *Shirakaba* (*White Birch*) *bundan* most closely associated with the I-novel and the Naturalist movement, as well as other literary coteries, and outside of a particular conception of the individual in modern Japan. Largely excluded from the male-dominated literary scene, alternative avenues for women writers and voices nonetheless were established, as the example of *Seitô* magazine below illustrates.

Hiratsuka Raicho's (1886-1971) declaration of September 1, 1911 in *Seitô* (*Bluestocking*) magazine marks a significant date in Japanese women's emancipation:

In the beginning, woman was the sun, a genuine human being. Now woman has become the moon. She is a moon that is pale like a sick person. She is kept alive and bright by others... We must again become the sun which is hidden... Woman will not be the moon anymore. (trans. Mori 36)

Importantly, *Seitô* did not intend necessarily to be an organ for politically united advocates of women's liberation, but originally aimed to provide an early twentieth-century forum upholding the value of narrating individual women's experience. Developed in response to the *Shirakaba* journal that had come out sixteen months earlier and which featured the new *shishôsetsu* writing by men, *Seitô*'s manifesto was "to show the uniqueness of individual

⁵² It should be noted, however, that she later criticizes the discriminatory practice of isolating *joryû bungaku* (*women's literature*) in *Joryû bungaku ga bungaku ni naru hi*, *Asahi Shinbun* (Sept. 2, 1986: 7).

writers and to develop women's writing (*joyrû bungaku*) in order to make a place for the future genius of women's literature"(Hiratsuka, *Seitô*, 1:1, 37).⁵³

A salient point, however, is that Hiratsuka and supporters of *Seitô* magazine also became part of the growing discourse on the early feminist movement in modern Japan, and *Seitô* eventually became "a forum for the advocacy of social and political change" after 1913 (Rodd 178). Empowering women of the working middle class by promoting women's personal writing, the dissemination of women's views on social problems,⁵⁴ and eventually printing a heated debate between Hiratsuka and Yosano Akiko (1878-1942) on women's independence and "mother's rights," the magazine nonetheless suffered criticism of a uniquely "personal" nature. Advancing women's liberation through their public and literary voices, Hiratsuka and other supporters and contributors were rumored to be *atarashii onna*, that is, politically radical as well as morally and ethically loose "New Women"(Mori 38). *New women* figures of *Seitô* first were met "with a mixture of disdain and curiosity"(Schierbeck 18), which then intensified to the point where "the government

⁵³ *Joryû bungaku* is made up of the components *jo* (woman, female writer or singer in this case) *ryû* (style, school) and *bungaku* (literature). It has been translated as "women's writing"(Ericson) as well as "female-school literature"(Ariga), "female-style literature" and "women's stream"(Schierbeck), "female-school literature"(Lippert and Selden xiv), or "feminine-style literature"(Vernon 137). I agree with Ericson's use of "women's writing" as it conveys some of the ambiguity in the Japanese usage without facilitating the conflation of an author's gender with a specific literary style implying evaluative contexts within which women's writing is read and operative.

⁵⁴ Laurel Rasplika Rodd adds the names Yamakawa Kikue (1890-1980) and Yamada Waka (1879-1957) to her list of four prominent women who rose to the challenge to redefine women's roles in the Taishô era (175-98).

often forbade the publication of *Seitô*, fearing that the magazine would destroy the family system and the morals of the country”(Mori 38).⁵⁵

Seitô was not the only Taishô era women’s magazine advocating women’s rights and promoting interest in women’s lives and the spread of women’s literature. Others included *Fujin Kôron*, *Fujin Sekai*, *Shukujo Gahô*, and *Jogaku Sekai*.⁵⁶ As a result of this publication of women’s *shishôsetsu* and opinions, the intimate and private experience of ordinary women began to be made public. Women were also interested, apparently, in representing modern individual experience. Despite *Seitô*’s interest in publishing women’s writing, however, the authors’ personal writing was not (simply) read as I-writing but read politically as a collective promoting women’s rights and even undermining general morality. This is significant in that women’s individual expression was un-individualized, in a sense, when it came to discussion, censorship, and characterization of these female authors as a whole writing against the state, against motherhood, and as undermining Japanese morality.

Through this censorship, we begin to see how the individual body narrated in women’s writing is both part of the increasingly privatized and liberal Taishô society, yet critically alienated as such. The evaluation of women’s personal writing based on their gender as either collectively dissident or individually trivial or inconsequential, rather than as promoting the ideals of the private and exploring individual experience, is worth further

⁵⁵ Also cf. Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Japan* (1983), particularly Chapter Eight, “The Bluestockings”(161-88); Gail E. Bernstein, *Re-Creating Japanese Women: 1600-1945* (1991). H.D. Harootunian also studies the repression of scholars/scholarship that challenged the existing establishment with regard to traditional female roles in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishô Democracy*.

⁵⁶ These are translated as Women’s Opinion, Women’s World, Working Women’s Magazine, and Women’s Education World, respectively.

analysis. In the masculine sexual experience narrated in *Futon* and many other texts of this time, neither agency nor voice are attributed to the female subject/character despite Katai's and other authors' recognition of the *new woman* figure of Taishô Japan. She essentially gains narration only through the discourse of male desire, through male personal — particularly sexual— experience.⁵⁷ The censorship *Seitô* experienced can be interpreted as a censorship of the female voice and body of women's *shishôsetsu*. It may also be read as the repression of the individual woman's experience written in literature in an atmosphere which was resonant with the voices of individual male authors who now clamored to describe and confess their own intimate, personal lives.

During the turbulent 1920s that witnessed the increase of personal writing in the form of the *shishôsetsu*, the notion of *new woman* eventually transformed into the figure *modan gaaru*, the romanized “modern girl” or *moga*, as she was abbreviated. In her name alone we immediately see the discourse of European and even American culture implied for this transgressive female figure narrated between cultures “who was both Japanese and Western —or possibly neither”, and who “played with the principle of cultural or national difference”(Silverberg 263). Reflecting the crises of the private versus the public like the individual of *shishôsetsu* discussed in chapter one, *modern girl* also “stood for change at a time when state authority was attempting to re-establish authority and stability” during an “era of economic crisis and social unrest”(263). According to Mariam Silverberg:

⁵⁷ The character of Yoshiko, as newly independent woman, is not alone in early modern Japanese literature. Tokuda Shûsei's novel, *Arakure* (*The wild one*, 1915), features a female protagonist Oshima, a “new type of assertive woman”(Fujii 197). Fujii notes: “Many of Shûsei's protagonists were women, and in many cases they were drawn with the female audiences in mind”(204).

The symbol of *namaiki* [cheeky, bold, brazen], uppity Modern Girl, who crossed gender and class boundaries and transgressed sexually, may indeed have spoken to those who demanded expanded social, sexual, and economic liberation for women and men. In this sense, she was admirable. But conversely, the Modern Girl did what she did because woman's new place in public as worker, intellectual, and political activist threatened the patriarchal family and its ideological support, the deferring woman who was presented in state ideology as the "Good Wife and Wise Mother." (Silverberg 263)

Among other issues it is evident that *modern girl* as the figure of modern urban working women challenged the patriarchal order. Moreover, her "indulgent" actions afforded by economic independence and mobility were interpreted as a challenge to the stability of the family. Further, her transgression was deemed politically and inextricably linked to the undermining of national stability. As such, the figure of *modern girl* narrated in women's *shishôsetsu* could be read as corresponding to the carnal indulgence of the private experience narrated in men's confessional *shishôsetsu*. At first ambivalent, their transgression eventually carried political, and then later generic, significance, though this "seriousness" was denied women writers of *shishôsetsu*.

The battle between the sexes would cross between the social and the literary sphere in a manner similar to the struggle of the individual emerging between Western and Japanese culture, as the examples of both personal literature and Sôseki's individualism were used to demonstrate in the previous chapter. As illustrated by Silverberg below, *modern girl*

highlighted the controversy over adoption of non-Japanese customs in everyday life and called into question the essentialism (as opposed to the European physiological determinism) that subordinated the Japanese woman to the Japanese man. This

thesis was indeed offered by the feminist Kitamura, who claimed that “labor struggle, tenancy struggle, household struggle, struggle between man and woman” were inevitable and had recently been joined to a new battle: “a struggle over good conduct” that pitted Japanese against Western behavior and used the Modern Girl to work out the struggle. (Silverberg 263)

Modern girl was liberated and independent, politically and socially transgressive, but she also worked out tensions between Japanese and Western culture that had to do with personal liberty, morality, and individualism. She is found, moreover, in women’s literature and *shishôsetsu* such as that promoted by *Seitô* and written by Uno. Of utmost importance to the present study, however, is how *modern girl* could be read also at the crux of the discussion of the subject and identity of *shishôsetsu* described as a product of European-influenced literary and philosophical movements, and a struggle for national and individual identity amid structural and economic change. Acting like a crucible, in a sense, for many aspects of Japan’s cultural crises, the figure of *modern girl* is not only between cultures, but also between traditional gender roles as a economically self-sufficient, independent, individual woman. In addition, she is the voice and body of liberated personal and sexual experience that extends beyond the confines of marriage and motherhood. Needless to say, she has not been explored as such in the context of *shishôsetsu* analysis and the subject(s) it (could) foreground(s).

Early discourse and Taishô literature attempting to name this female character of Taishô Japan centered largely on *the body* of this character/woman, though by gender this figure is critically pre-empted as “Woman” rather than individual “woman.” This is opposed to the reception of the private confession and indulgence of the urban male of men’s *shishôsetsu* that came to occupy a place in Japanese society, literature, and history as expressing personal liberalization and privatization. Women’s *shishôsetsu* was not allowed the capacity for general individual emancipation, and emphasis is instead placed

on the social roles the patriarchy upheld and which she transgressed, rather than on her individual experience, or on her individual political, philosophical, and literary action as read in women's writing.

It was shown earlier that the confessional impulse is generally implied in *shishôsetsu* genre descriptions. I-writing often features the emotional, the sexual, and the intimate body of the subject who is marginalized through "confessing" his own uniqueness. Once abject, however, the confessional self of modern Japanese *shishôsetsu* is no longer the marginal: the *body* written in and by the male experience at least has been publicly received and, in a sense, normalized by the literary institution, with the "defective" party now becoming the common posturing of the artist/protagonist in *shishôsetsu*. In contrast to the way the abject male body was nonetheless canonized in *shishôsetsu* and modern literary criticism, the body of the *new woman/modern girl* of Taishô Japan remains untrussed, socially unbounded, beyond borders, and domestically and culturally un-husbandable. She is often characterized as on the move, in pants, and in Western styles which do not restrict her movement nor her liaisons. Destabilizing, this intimate body written in modern Japanese women's *shishôsetsu*, seen particularly in Uno's fiction, is transgressive like the indulgent male of men's personal writing. She traverses through society and between lovers, across and against traditional family roles of "good wife and wise mother," transgresses gender boundaries, and has a freedom of movement formerly unavailable to women in Japan. The figure of *new woman/modern girl* written in women's *shishôsetsu* remains, nevertheless, the abject, destabilizing, inconsequential, depoliticized and therefore generically marginalized culture.

The question of whether these *modern girl* women and other Taishô women writers consciously and deliberately engaged in feminist activism is not as important as the effect they (could have) had on traditional discourse of the literary institution, the state and familial order, and the empowerment of individuals *as individuals*, particularly that read in the genre *shishôsetsu* which places the modern subject in the fore. The complex tensions

between the political and the private presented in writing is further brought out by consideration of the persistent category *joryû bungaku* or *women's writing*. Rather than isolating women's from men's *shishôsetsu* in an essentialized binarism, or designating certain features of women's writing as intrinsic and specific, the examination of women's writing that follows shows how the theory surrounding *shishôsetsu* can act as a conduit of ideological hegemony interested in the identification of a particular Japanese subject. A number of universals assumed by *shishôsetsu* criticism thus will be challenged with the placement of Uno's and Tsushima's writing against/within genre norms.

The institutional absence of women writers from canonized literature has been discussed by many, including Brown, Ueno Chizuko, Hijiya-Kirschnereit,⁵⁸ Joan E. Ericson, Wakakuwa Midori, and Chieko M. Ariga.⁵⁹ Ariga voices their shared argument that "the sheer numbers of Japanese women writers recognized in this century tend to obscure the fact that women have hardly been recognized in the evaluative body of the core Japanese literary institutions"(45). She argues, for example, that Amino Kiku's (1900-1978) presentations of "the 'female grotesque' in the context of compulsory heterosexual

⁵⁸ In *Joryû bungaku ga bungaku ni naru hi*, Hijiya-Kirschnereit remarks that, "of course, ability being equal, women and men writers are treated fairly. But, [as she adds,] if you look at literary anthologies and literary histories, the inside story reveals that women writers have not been treated fairly"(11).

⁵⁹ cf. Ueno Chizuko, "The Rise of Feminist Criticism." *Japanese Book News*, 2 (Spring 1993): 5, 20; Chieko M. Ariga, "Who's Afraid of Amino Kiku?" in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future*. (1995) 43-60; Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Joryû bungaku ga bungaku ni naru hi*[The day women's literature becomes literature] *Asahi Shinbun*, Sept. 2, 1996, p11.

economy”(46) have led to her critical exclusion.⁶⁰ The implication is that women’s writing and the female subject, autobiographical and otherwise, is not only marginalized but also read at times as inferior to and/or threatening institutionalized order; in effect, then, the female subject becomes the abject culture. This is not unlike the example of censorship *Seitô* magazine experienced as an instance of “destabilizing morality.” But what do we make of the perceived threat that women’s voices, women’s bodies, and women’s literature supposedly pose when the pervasive atmosphere of *shishôsetsu* generally is considered “too personal” and a presentation of the abject? Many studies have found *shishôsetsu* to be a genre of “degrading” self-absorption, the “baring of secret sins”(Keene 506-7), and the “deformed product of a deformed society”(Suzuki 3). By engaging the abject in the present discussion of *shishôsetsu*, I illuminate ways the individual body, particularly the female gendered body of *joryû bungaku*, is conceived.

Requiring that literary members of the canon of Japanese authors generally “conform to the patriarchal definition of ‘woman,’” Ariga describes “the mechanism of ideological control and exclusion operating in the patriarchal Japanese literary institution”(46). She not only names Hayashi Fumiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, Miyamoto Yuriko, Tsuboi Sakae, and Uno Chiyo as prominent early twentieth-century female writers, but also describes them as authors who present women characters “always constructed in relationship to men,” and who, as such, maintain part of the “compulsory heterosexual economy”(46). It will be evident that Uno often portrays herself in relation to men, albeit in untraditional liaisons. However, it also will be clear that the writing of Uno and other women authors has nonetheless only tended to gain membership in a separate canon of women’s writing. In a related case, Tsushima’s writing portrays female characters

⁶⁰ Donald Keene includes Amino Kiku, however, in his list of I-novelists, describing her as a writer who “invited readers to participate in her self-discovery, a never-ending process that grew subtler with her years”(vol. I; 531).

participating in a heterosexual economy. At the same time, however, Tsushima expresses madness through female protagonists at odds with society as well as in incoherent, unstable and contested relations with men. Tsushima's families often feature absent fathers along with women in questionable, masochistic and provocative liaisons with male characters, and as participants in alternative social configurations. Tsushima's individual narrators/protagonists are often remarkable for their individualism, isolation, and real rather than romanticized sexuality, such that even a traditional heterosexual economy present, perhaps, in other Japanese writing becomes at least questioned and at most thoroughly undermined in hers.

Relegated "to the category of *joryû bungaku*, regardless of their period of activity, school, or style"(Ueno 19) since the early Taishô era when it was first formulated, Brown reminds us while asking whether "revolution is a possibility"(16), that the category of women's writing also carries with it the heavy fixity of association with the established classical literary tradition. Viewed from a historical perspective, Sachiko Schierbeck remarks that "before the postwar period, novels by women were customarily underestimated by the *Bundan*"(12)⁶¹ and that "male intellectuals who thought the works of women writers lacked logical qualities labeled them *Joryuu bungaku* (female-style literature)"(12). Reinforcing the equation presented earlier, male authors = individualism = *shishôsetsu*, as contrasted to women authors = women's experience = *joryû bungaku*, it is apparent that Taishô male writers developed the "I-novel" while female writers such as

⁶¹ Schierbeck notes that in 1888, with *Yabu no uguisu* (*Nightingale in the Grove*), Miyake Kaho (female author 1868-1943) broke into acceptable circles. Further, Higuchi Ichiyô, Yosano Akiko, and Nogami Yaeko eventually "became the forerunners of the new 'women' writers"(12).

Uno, Hirabayashi, and Hayashi engendered “female-style literature.”⁶² Ericson remarks that there was a sense literature written by women constituted a distinct style.

Women writers of the 1920’s also often favored a confessional style; however, their works were generally categorized not as *watakushi shôsetsu*, but rather as *jiden shôsetsu* (autobiographical fiction)(Itagaki, “*Shôwa no joryû sakka*,” 32; Yoshida, 16; Kora, 110). The notion that “women’s literature” constituted a distinct style must have derived from the presumption that women’s confessional autobiographical fiction (*jiden shôsetsu*) was somehow different from the *watakushi shôsetsu* composed by men.(91)⁶³

Thus *shishôsetsu* would seem to carry the implication that there is, in addition to the narration of experience, the sense that the individual “confesses,” that the genre features an abject subject, and that the text is, moreover, an aesthetic treatment of an actual life. Again, the theoretical ambiguity surrounding each of the terms themselves leads to even greater confusion when attempts are made to distinguish between the two based on impressionistic or deductive criteria, as Taishô critics have attempted, and as Ericson points out. In

⁶²The category *joryû bungaku* may be considered by some a re-historicizing and even positive re-valuation of modern and contemporary women’s literature extending from women’s personal writing that flourished during the Heian era. Regardless of how it is evaluated, as a monolithic category to which women’s writing belongs first, it depoliticizes and ignores the individuality of experience the subject narrates.

⁶³ *Jiden shôsetsu* is literally translated as *ji* (self; or oneself, personally) and *den* (transmit, legend, tradition) hence *jiden* (autobiography). *Shôsetsu*, as indicated earlier, is translated as fiction, writing, or novel. Thus, as autobiographical fiction, *jiden shôsetsu* seems generally understood as more concretely expressing events of an individual life.

addition, Ericson also indicates how this “fixity of categorization” of women’s writing based on an understanding of literary value historically persists.

The boundaries of women’s literature were thus demarcated by a set of conceptual antinomies, the pure and the popular, the confessional and the autobiographical. These oppositions were always imperfect, and allowances were made for exceptions. But their combined effect implicitly devalued the work of women writers as merely popular and aesthetically second-rate. (93)⁶⁴

The critic above points out the separation between men’s and women’s literature based on a distinction in terms not only of perceived style but also of worth. Evaluation of the literature thus equating the “pure” *shishôsetsu* with men’s writing, and the “popular” confession with women authors, indicates not only a hierarchical importance placed on men’s writing but on the male subject and the way he was presented in writing.

As mentioned, modern as well as contemporary women’s I-writing is noticeably absent from some, though not all, studies of the genre *shishôsetsu*⁶⁵ and many studies of

⁶⁴ Ericson adds: “Women writers grouped by critics under this heading [women’s writing] shared no unifying tradition, no school, and no journal.... To be so categorized said nothing of an author’s relation with other literary, intellectual, social, and political trends. Moreover, the seeming simplicity of the term facilitated a conflation between references to an author’s sex and aesthetic judgments of her style... [and] the label suggested a permanence when, as a critical assessment, it should only have been taken as a contingent association.”(Ericson 91-93).

⁶⁵ Fowler, for one, qualifies his own selection of texts to the exclusion of women writers as one apparently governed by the limited scope of his study, adding that certain other

the modern novel. However, the category of women's writing persists in Japan as a rather *ad hoc* method of addressing women's writing.⁶⁶ Increasing indigenous emancipation and international women's liberation was reflected also in a tentative shift of the 1960s toward gender equality in the critical literary institution and the lifting of the derogatory connotation of women's writing. Schierbeck remarks that Kurahashi Yumiko's debut work *Parutai* (*Party*), "a critical and satirical account of the hierarchy and regulations of the students' communist party... received tremendous attention from the public and praise from the critics [to the point that they] agreed that her writing should not be labeled *Joryuu bungaku* (feminine style literature)"(21).⁶⁷

writers, such as Yosano Akiko and Hiratsuka Raicho, "were devoted as much to feminist causes as they were to literary production"(xxix).

⁶⁶ The term has become even naturalized at times, as is evident in the period post-World War II which saw the establishment of the *Joryuu bungakukai* (The Association of Women Writers). In addition, the Women's Literature Prize was inaugurated in 1947 by three female authors—Uno Chiyo, Sata Ineko (b. 1904), and Oohara Tomie (b. 1912). However, attention should be paid to the ideology of "women's writing" even in its "positive" connotations, as are apparent for example around 1955, when one critic remarks that "a new generation of women writers emerged who expressed a new attitude to life and were distinctively more emancipated than their predecessors.... Critics welcomed the arrival of these gifted women and praised their works as a revival of women's writing which rivalled the Heian female literature in the 10th century"(Schierbeck 21-22).

⁶⁷ Ericson also remarks on the permeability of the concept of women's literature by certain "great" authors but also states: "Such a categorization is significant, for at its core is a judgment of the merits of a writer's literary aesthetics. Women may publish in prestigious journals, but the categories through which their work is discussed prejudice their contributions as marginal and outside the literary mainstream"(Ericson 76).

Tracing the history of *joryû bungaku* along with women's increasing emancipation, if Uno's early life and work can be associated with the first wave feminist movement, Tsushima's early writing might be associated roughly with the second feminist wave of the 1970s. This latter feminist movement also was accompanied by a resurgent number of literary self-analyses that reflected major cultural, economic, and political shifts that took place again in Japan after World War II. In this historical context, by 1979 it was claimed that "postwar women writers have purged the label *Joryuu bungaku* of its derogatory prewar connotations; now that women had the freedom to use their talents to create on a par with men, they were developing forms and techniques which would transform the Japanese novel into a genre suited to the complex modern world"(Schierbeck 21-22). Marked by Japan's post-war crises, individual liberation, and differing attitudes toward "progress," it is significant that the representations of individual may have changed. Later twentieth-century expressions of individual experience are demonstrated by narrative forms that apparently differ from the Realist/Naturalist tradition characterizing early modern Japanese literature and *shishôsetsu* practice. Like other post-World War II writers, Tsushima exemplifies this historical, technical shift that is evident in both women's writing and *shishôsetsu* generally. Narrating "real" experience in more fictional forms, in what I call a "hyper-real" narrative space, Tsushima uses subjective, discursive forms of *shishôsetsu* presentation of the "I" in order to explore alternatives to positivist ways of representing the subject, as well as to probe issues of individual human psychology, alienation, communication, human relationships, and marginalization, as will be examined at length in chapter four.

The implication that "female-style" literature remained a self-centered, personal exploration nevertheless served to uphold a literary-critical distinction that continued to imply women's limited aesthetic and social impact. As recently as 1996, Tsushima's own impression of the category *joryû bungaku* was that:

the notion of “women’s literature” as a specific style no longer reflected the diversity of approaches employed by women writers. [Tsushima] also expressed annoyance at the continued existence of a segregated space in bookstores for women’s literature, separate from general literature, yet she gave as a reason for this that perhaps readers simply were used to this division, and admitted to haunting these sections herself to see what has been newly published.

Tsushima expressed the dominant interpretation: that the segregation of women’s literature cannot be understood as a case of contemporary discrimination but reflects an immutable tradition, harking back to classical antiquity, deeply rooted in the public’s mind.(Ericson 76)

That the term *joryû bungaku* has been purged of its derogatory prewar connotations is debatable, as the author’s annoyance expressed toward the persistent categorization of all women’s writing as *joryû bungaku* indicates. Tsushima’s ambivalent position sketched above, however, also expresses some of the difficulties faced by a writer and reader grappling with the “positive” connotation of the term *joryû bungaku* as related to women’s literature of the Heian period. It seems further that the women’s space allowed by the designation, while perhaps negative, also permits institutional, and perhaps even protected, expression of women’s experience and women’s writing.

Ericson recognizes the persuasive power of identifying oneself as a woman writer within the grand tradition of women’s writing in Japan, and perhaps also to a unique mode or particular modes of expression of women’s writing. She nonetheless asserts: “Why women have remained marginal within the modern Japanese canon cannot be explained without serious consideration of the institutional practices and social processes that determine who gets published, who constitutes the readership, how a work is received—in addition to how the literary aesthetic is conveyed”(76). What seems insufficiently debated is the persistence of the category *joryû bungaku* within the literary institution and in the

contemporary Japanese marketplace despite the definite aesthetic, literary, philosophical, and political interests and accomplishment of individual women authors. This segregation is particularly tangible when *shishôsetsu* genre theory can be seen to demonstrate ideological biases which extend to gender.

As demonstrated in the discussion above, early narrations of female experience, particularly that characteristic of *modern girl*, implicitly challenge the presentation of experience of the modern Taishô male subject found at the heart of “serious” *shishôsetsu*. The historical overdeterminism that has characterized conceptions of the Taishô male Japanese subject, personal experience and the validity and importance of narrated uniqueness, the isolation of the individual, and the rigidity of the realist/naturalist impulse behind presentations of this subject in *shishôsetsu*, are also brought into question through reading modern as well as contemporary women’s *shishôsetsu*. Through the study of Uno’s and Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* which follows, we are compelled to question not only how the literary aesthetic of *shishôsetsu* is conveyed, but what exactly constitutes the literary aesthetic designated by the genre. The *shishôsetsu* originally conceived as the product of Japanese Naturalism, and as exhibiting objective representation of the intimate and private experience, can be read as a modernist project which is destabilized by the inclusion of both modern and contemporary women’s bodies into genre discussion. Importantly, *shishôsetsu* has adapted to changing social structures and ways of experiencing the world, as seen in Tsushima’s and other writing, though genre criticism has not generally escaped its own fixation with a mimetic theory of representation and a particular emphasis on truth accessible through this representation. By questioning the critical discourse surrounding the genre *shishôsetsu* through a look at different writing bodies, and though the examination of works by both Uno and Tsushima, I hope to interrogate both the modern and contemporary critical, literary, and social climate within which individual *shishôsetsu* writers, readers, and critics exist.

Chapter Three: Uno Chiyo

“To have fun. That is the theme of Kazue’s life.”

Uno, *Happiness*, 1971

Uno Chiyo’s remarkable life spanned four eras: Meiji, Taishô, Shôwa, and Heisei. She began publishing her work in 1917 with a short story in a newspaper contest, wrote her first major short story in 1921 with *Shifun no kao* (*Painted Face*), and continued publishing until her death at 98. Uno’s frequent theme, particularly in her later years, is personal happiness, as evidenced in many of her titles including two short stories entitled *Kôfuku* (*Happiness*).⁶⁸ Uno’s prolific body of texts even includes many autobiographical works on happiness published over the last five or ten years of her life, including:

Headlong into happiness in life [1980]

The talent of knowing happiness [1982]

My happiness of the past, the present, and from now on [1985]

Happiness is saying “Happiness” [1985]

Living happiness: growing old happiness [1992]

A School for Life (*A school for becoming happy*) [1992]

My theory of happiness [1993]

⁶⁸ The 1924 work was also the title of her collection of short stories of the same year, while the second *Happiness* of 1970 won the Women’s Literature writing award in 1971.

By the end of her writing career, when Uno published *Watashi nandaka shinanai yôna ki ga surun desu* (*Somehow, I feel like I'm not going to die*) only a few months before her death in 1996, Uno had written and re-written her “self” in her *shishôsetsu* many times over. As such, one is forced to pay attention to the construction of identity, rather than any identity *per se*, in Uno’s autobiographical writing. Uno’s sustained exploration of happiness becomes analogous, as we will see, to her autobiographical construction and reconstruction of self. The subject, that is, Uno’s personal identity, may be traced through narratives of the protagonist “I” and a third-person protagonist often called “Kazue” in Uno’s autobiographical writing. As such, Uno’s “I” operates like a sign of process, with no particular end nor conclusion achieved for the “self” but an end in itself. In the texts explored here, I look at how Uno’s thematic quest for happiness may also be read as a narrative for identity, an itinerant un-integrated identity which is never fully realized, perhaps never fully realizable. What will become increasingly apparent is the way that Uno’s narrated identity in her works operates and is commodified on a continual interface with her reading public.

Uno as Ingenue

Iro zange (*Confessions of love*, 1933-35) is often considered Uno’s first major novel. However, the fact that much of Uno’s writing before *Iro zange* was serialized can be understood as Taishô and early Shôwa occurrences of women’s *shishôsetsu*, linked dually to the emergence of the popular movement of men’s I-writing and to the changing social climate for Taishô women.⁶⁹ Before 1935, *Haka wo abaku* (*Opening the grave*, 1921),⁷⁰

⁶⁹Some other early women writers who wrote autobiographical fiction at this time are Tamura Toshiko with *Miirano kuchibeni* (*Painted lips of a mummy*, 1913), *Kanaajo no*

Kôfuku (*Happiness*, 1924; Uno's first story with this title), *Michiyo no yomeiri* (*Michiyo goes to wed*, 1925), the early serialization of *Iro zange* (1933-35), *Mohô no tensai* (*Genius of Imitation*, 1934), *Wakare mo tanoshi* (*Parting is also pleasurable*, 1935) and *Miren* (*Lingering attachment*, 1936) are among examples of Uno's autobiographical fiction which had appeared in print.⁷¹ Uno had also published a number of critical, personal essays in

seikatsu (*Her life*, 1915), *Hakaisuru mae* (*Before the break-up*, 1918) an author whose work was also published in *Seitô*; Miyamoto Yuriko in *Nobuko* (*Nobuko*, 1928), *1932-nen no haru* (*Spring of 1932*); Hirabayashi Taeko's *Azakeru* (*Self-Mockery*, 1927), *Sabaku no hana* (*Desert Flowers*, 1957); Nakamoto Takako; Sata Ineko in *Kurenai* (*Crimson*, 1938); and Ota Yoko in articles/stories for *Nyonin Geijutsu* (*Women's art journal*, 1932). Two authors who have received some mention in genre studies, Keene's and Hijjiya-Kirschner's respectively, of *shishôsetsu*, are Amino Kiku—disciple of Shiga Naoya—for *Furoshiki* (*Cloth wrapper*, 1940), *Haha* (*Mothers*, 1941), *Tsumetai kokoro* (*Cold-Hearted*, 1946), and Hayashi Fumiko with *Hôrôki* (*Vagabond*, 1930) and *Fukin to uo no machi* (*Town of Accordion and Fish*, 1931).

⁷⁰ As the other above-mentioned stories will be discussed later, here I briefly describe only *Opening a Grave*. This third-person short story, serialized also in *Chûô kôron* in May 1922, is based on a young teacher "Yoshiko" and her growing social consciousness of racial, social, and state politics at her school and in her neighborhood. It is apparently loosely based on Uno's own experience of awakening as a young teacher in Kawashimo where she witnesses poverty, abuse and petty bureaucracy in the form of school officials. The story shows an obvious socialist literary influence that was then gaining popularity in the era of Taishô democracy. It also received the *Chûô kôron* prize.

⁷¹ cf. vol. 1, 2, and 3 of the *Uno Chiyo Zenshû* which respectively contain fifteen, one, and nineteen fictional works (many autobiographical), totalling thirty-five works published in magazines and newspapers, serially or otherwise, prior to 1935.

various magazines and newspapers at this time which contributed to the discourse which came to surround her person. Before looking at her *shishôsetsu* specifically, I examine the historical, cultural, and literary environment within which Uno's early writing arose.

Uno's early publications are significant to the present study of *shishôsetsu* for their focus on the individual, on the literary self of an early twentieth-century Japanese woman articulated via *shishôsetsu*. As will become apparent, much of her work explores her personal life and writing and how she relates to the world. However, though a dominant theme, Uno did not write only of the relationship between the sexes. Like many young writers the world over, including members of the Naturalist and *shishôsetsu* group, the *Shirakaba bundan*,⁷² Uno also writes an early "portrait of the artist as a young woman" in *Mohô no Tensai* (*A Genius of Imitation*, 1934). *A Genius of Imitation* is the highly self-conscious narrative of a young writer coming to terms with an understanding of herself as an imitator of writing —of Europe's Chekhov, Strindberg, and George Sand, among others—and as influenced by the work of her current lover, the surrealist painter Tôgô Seiji, with whom she lived from 1929-1934. The first-person narrator arrives ultimately at a point of self-awareness, that her art need not be the product of imitation, but of creation. Uno's story concludes:

When I am older [and past the age of 'imitating'] and I understand and throw away that instinct to be a "good wife," and I don't become lonely after doing away with it, couldn't I write something like "a story of the self"? It's good to be a woman, I only want to become a woman who is just "me, myself," but.... (*Uno Chiyo Zenshû* [UCZ], 12:16, trans. mine)

⁷² Shiga Naoya, to mention only one prominent writer of I-novels, writes about becoming a writer in *Aru otoko, sono ane no shi* (*A man and the death of his sister*) where he defends his chosen occupation of author to his father who scorns the profession.

What is apparent in the passage above is the narrator/protagonist's knowledge of her position, as writing as a woman and therefore liable to criticism or dismissal on the basis of gender. The agency of the narrator's voice affirming "It's good to be a woman" deliberately establishes this position, and thus overtly refers to the social, literary, and political climate within which the female author exists and writes, and wherein her personal story, her *jibun no shôsetsu*, or "story of self," would be received by modern Japanese society. The self-deprecatory disclaimer *keredomo* "but" at the end of Uno's final sentence, more than a linguistic expression to soften the statement, articulates uncertainty, and a wish that Uno would like to write *her* story. The self-conscious disclaimer could indicate the protagonist's awareness of writing as a woman in a male-dominated field, resonate with a wider social implication that women's writing is of lesser aesthetic value, reflect the social value placed on the [in]significance of a woman's life, and be colored, perhaps, with the author's own questioning of her ability — all of which speak to the discursive social context in which the utterance of the "I" in writing of the body is both produced and received.

These insecurities narrated by the protagonist at the same time will not, apparently, quash the speaker's desire to write her "I" and the desire for her individualism to be recognized. *Mohô no Tensai* also describes in retrospect the life of a young girl, rebelliously reading "frivolous" literature prohibited by her father on the outhouse toilet. While Uno "grew up wanting to do whatever [her father] had forbidden," the speaking voice of *Mohô no Tensai* also describes how Uno as a young girl was "deeply stimulated by a then fashionable motto, 'In antiquity, woman was the sun'" (trans. Tanaka 190), which are precisely the opening lines of *Seitô* I discussed earlier in relation to women's writing and the emergent female voice in Taishô society. In this same story, Uno describes an emancipation realized through the idea that she and her "friends at the school thought that [they] might really be the sun, [and] published a small magazine, as many literary-minded

young people did in those days, featuring poems and essays of an abstract nature”(ibid. 190), thereby demonstrating her adoption of these early “feminist” or anti-establishment influences. Echoing the revolutionary intent, if not the themes, of early editions of *Seitô* magazine and the positions taken up by its female contributors, Uno deliberately challenged her father’s authority and flaunted tenets of the patriarchal establishment. The persistence of the young women in this social climate which had already sought to censor the Japanese Bluestockings of *Seitô* is also remarkable: they “were summoned by the principal. ‘I trust this writing doesn’t reflect what you girls really believe,’ the principal scolded us gravely in the cold room... [However,] soon after this dressing down we joined another literary group, outside the school, that published a typeset magazine”(ibid. 190-191).

The uneasy though growing independence the young author establishes in *Mohô no Tensai* is also a literary echo of Uno’s fictional and non-fictional publications during the 1920s and early 1930s including *Atarashii seikatsu e no shuppatsu* (*Leaving for a New Life*; in *Fujin Kôron* Dec. 1928) and *Aisubeki tsurukusa -Tôgô Seiji to Watashi* (*Vines which must love —Togo Seiji and me*; in *Fujin Kôron* Sept. 1930). If her fictional autobiographies were not sufficient impetus, these articles among others certainly helped to move Uno, her writing, and her life into the same lime-lit arena of “public spectacle” of the individual many male authors of contemporary *shishôsetsu* participated in and competed for. Uno’s essays treated women’s independence and the publicly fascinating, personal details of her relationship and divorce from Ozaki Shirô and her coming together with Tôgô the painter, which, in different ways, also helped to realize a woman’s independence and individualism. The relationship with Tôgô would be treated also in the subsequent *shishôsetsu* *Wakare mo tanoshi* (*Parting is also pleasurable*, 1935), *Miren*.(*Regret*, 1936), *Iro zange*(*Confessions of love*, 1933-35), and much later in *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi*

(*Story of a certain woman*, 1971) and *Ikite yuku watashi*(*I will go on living*, 1982).⁷³ As we begin to see, Uno's private life was exposed in a public arena, and Japan was an open market for confession.⁷⁴

The public played a necessary and reflexive role in this discursive creation of the author/protagonist "I" of *shishôsetsu*. Fowler describes the environment within which the *shishôsetsu* text was received, where, in what Fowler calls its "heyday" in the second and third decades of this century, the *shishôsetsu* thrived on an intimate actor-audience rapport. The Taishô environment was one "where writers, critics, and interested readers of the

⁷³ Not all of the personal narratives were told in the first person. In *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a certain woman*), for example, Uno is "Kazue," a male teacher she has a scandalous affair with resulting in her dismissal is "Shinoda," Ozaki is "Jôji," and Tôgô is "Tanabe Tôkô." These and other stories will be looked at more closely in the section "These Boots are Made for Walking."

⁷⁴ To address the popularity of *shishôsetsu* to the point that writers realized the marketability of the self-exposés, Fowler says that: "From the outset, critics dwelt on the [*shishôsetsu*] text's lack of authorial distance, but in doing so lent [*shishôsetsu*] an air of notoriety that insured its popular success. Even ridicule was good publicity, and Katai soon capitalized on it, writing in quick succession a trilogy [after *Futon*; *Sei*(1908), *Tsuma*(1908-9) and *En*(1910) translated as *Life*, *The wife*, and *The bond*] based entirely on his domestic life. Other writers soon followed with accounts of their lives: Shimazaki Tôson with *Haru* (*Spring*, 1908), Iwano Hômei with *Tandeki* (*Decadence*, 1909) Chikamatsu Shûkô with *Wakaretaru tsuma ni okuru tegami* (*A letter to my estranged wife*, 1910) and Tokuda Shûsei with *Kabi* (*Mildew*, 1911). Masamune Hakuchô argues that Katai's success in exploiting his private life was interpreted by other writers as a green light for self-exposé, a course that would not have occurred to them had *Futon* not met with such critical acclaim and notoriety"(Fowler 112).

bundan triad...[read a] reality in literature [which] stemmed largely from the narrator's ability to speak in literally the same voice as his hero and thereby invite reader identification"(xxv-vi). Fowler's study of the *bundan*, and the cross-over between the literary and personal lives of its Taishô era authors, is in this way useful to the study of Uno's fictional autobiographies and commodification. Though not a member of the *bundan*, the repercussions of which were discussed in previous chapters treating the discursive creation of the authorial "I," Uno's life became widely known in the public sphere. This occurred: through her literary work and publications in *Fujin kôron* and *Chûô kôron*, as well as other magazines; the independent positions she took in critical and personal essays; her general public reputation; and the serialization and publication of her colorful romantic narratives. It was into this wider discourse of "self" that Uno's personal "I" of *shishôsetsu* narratives came and continued to be identified. If "Honda [Shugo] and others argue that the test of any *shishôsetsu* lies in the recognizability of its author,"(Fowler 66) and that the author's style further becomes recognizable to the reader from the author's previous texts, as Fowler also notes, the writing by and surrounding Uno holds generous ramifications for all further creation or reading of her literary/personal identity in her *shishôsetsu*.

Itô Sei's remarks also help illuminate the climate within which *shishôsetsu* was produced and received:

[The *shishôsetsu*] was written with the expectation that the reader would know the hero's (that is to say the author's) personal history without explanation of his circumstances and position. The hero in such a text is therefore a virtual nonentity, so superficially is he described... The reader had to glean what information he could about the hero's personality and circumstances from gossip about the author current in literary circles, *or be familiar with the hero from*

previous texts that reported on the author's private life.(Fowler 66-67, emphasis Fowler's)

Itô's remark on the presumption of the author, who writes with the expectation that their hero/protagonist will be *shaped* by the knowledge of readers, who in turn know the author/hero's personal history, gossip, or other texts and add to the author's "I," registers a complex process that describes the literary climate of early *shishôsetsu* in which Uno also wrote. As noted elsewhere, the reader's familiarity with the circumstances of any author's actual life guides the reading of a text as *shishôsetsu*. In this, Fowler underscores the importance of readings of the writer's *literary* production versus the authority Itô would ascribe to the "actual" author's history, while he states, however, that Itô "ignores the ramifications of his own insight: namely, that the reader need not rely on the finally inaccessible life. The *oeuvre* is enough. Regular readers of literary magazines [here Fowler refers to the *bundan*]...would have no trouble piecing together the 'lives' of the authors about which they read"(Fowler 67). In this interest in biographical information on the author/subject, though Fowler recognizes the discursive milieu surrounding the creation and reception of the autobiographical "I," he yet does not account for *writing of the body* outside recognition by the literary coteries or the *bundan*. The limitation he establishes by isolating the function of the *bundan* would not, therefore, indicate finally "that the *oeuvre* is enough" because of the correlation any action of the *bundan* demands for precise renderings of the *historical* author's experience.

The discursive circulation of readings of the author's "I" in the text, through actual "fact," and by the reading of the "I" across the *oeuvre* is visible in the reception of Uno's work even though she did not belong to a specific *bundan*, and is also apparent in Uno's writing and her own self-conscious and reflexive creation of the "I" in various media. As demonstrated in previous chapters here in analysis of the discursive and corporeal "I" of *shishôsetsu*, surrounding literary or "factual" discourse on the author helps the reader to

identify, as well as the author to create, the subject “Uno,” who, at this early point in her literary career, had become somewhat of a public ingenue, recognized iconoclast, and fashionable *new woman/modern girl*. Literary, biographical, social and critical discourse thus had a simultaneous effect on each other, in both the reception and re-production of the authorial self in the literary work. Uno’s deliberate and self-conscious public examinations of her life, her experience, and her partners in her fictional and non-fictional work not only call for a reading of her concurrently published fiction as *shishôsetsu*, but set the stage for further interpretations of her narratives of self in later life.

Echoing through the interrelated discourse on, by, and about the *shishôsetsu* author Uno herself, and on which her protagonists’ resemblance to the author is judged according to the practice of *shishôsetsu*, is the ring of Uno’s proclamation of 1929. She states, in *Vines that must love—Tôgô Seiji and me*:

Economic independence

Emotional independence

And a determination to follow my own will!

(Trans. Copeland 40)

Made public in a magazine which enjoyed wide circulation, Uno voices emancipation in her desire “to live alone”(Copeland 40). Freed from a marriage to Ozaki Shiro, her second husband (their marriage lasted from 1923-1929), though embarking on what would become an infamous relationship with Tôgô, Uno’s personal and independent call to arms on the public pages of *Fujin Kôron* is notable in its exercise of freedom from institutionalized expectations of female conduct. In this essay of exhilarating nonconformism to prescribed

roles of women is an independence also traced to and through the writings of Uno's *shishôsetsu*.⁷⁵

But, as I have already demonstrated with *joyrû bungaku*, along with attempting brave, personal literary forays into the literary world, Uno's work also carried with it the potential to be judged on various gendered fronts. Because Uno portrayed a developing sense of individual self, her own gender, and her sexuality, her work was judged on a social level and criticized on a personal level. She did not uphold the image of *yoi okusan* "good wife" nor the Meiji-era *ryosai kenbo*, "good wife, wise mother."⁷⁶ Neither did she

⁷⁵ Photos taken at this same time as Uno's call for personal independence, showing the image of Uno as a short-haired woman in 1929 "modern dress" groupings, also attest that Uno was a social rebel: short hair for women had been outlawed in Japan as late as 1872.

⁷⁶ *Yoi okusan* is an emblem for Uno's nemesis described in *Mohô no Tensai*, "that good wife, wise mother" role for women idealized yet transgressed by individuals during the Taishô era. According to her biographer, Rebecca Copeland, when Uno entered Iwakuni Higher School for Girls in 1910, "the subjects covered were limited to those that would make 'good wives and wise mothers.' Fiction, it was feared, would corrupt 'shallow-minded' girls with unhealthy fantasies and immoral suggestions. Emphasis was placed instead on sewing, cooking, childcare, and the fundamentals of the eighteenth-century Confucian treatise on female subservience *Onna diagaku* (Greater Learning for Women)" (Copeland 9). I would add that *onna daigaku* not only emphasized women's responsibility in the "house," the *ie*—to obey first her father, her husband, then her son—, but also taught that a woman should either guard herself against or be "sent away" for committing particular crimes apparently as the product of her moral and intellectual weakness. The crimes include adultery, lying, talking too much, jealousy, independence, and the inability to bear children. For an excellent discussion of women's "responsibilities," see Kathleen S. Uno's "Women and Changes in the Household Division

have confidence in her ability “to write her own story” as a *woman*. Notably, the reception of Uno’s work, of which she is cognisant in her writing as seen in the artist passage above, is linked to gender. The subject of the psychological or emotional life Uno develops in her autobiographical fiction would be received, as the author seems also aware, differently because she was a woman, not “just” an individual speaking. Indeed, critical approaches to her work would sound an oddly personal note and reflect particular social mores, as will be investigated more fully in a subsequent section. As seen above, however, a Taishô *new woman* persona developed around Uno and was encouraged both by her and her public, even while the latter denied her in the sense of censoring woman’s individual expression and treating her as transgressive. This discursive interaction of writer and readers which effectively generated “Uno” in her early *shishôsetsu* presages the general treatment Uno’s literary work, both fictional and non-fictional, received later in the twentieth century and which would have her presenting her self, her psychological life, and her daily life for public consumption.

Love and Sex in Shishôsetsu

Before analyzing the reception of Uno’s personal writing, it is crucial to establish a more thorough understanding of sexuality and the individual in *shishôsetsu* and the subject Uno portrays in her writing. Focusing on the individual self and sexual intimacy, as is done by

of Labor,” in Bernstein, *Re-creating Japanese Women: 1600-1945*: 17-41. The ideals of Meiji Japanese society of *onna daigaku* and “proper” women’s behavior would figure repeatedly in Uno Chiyo’s *oeuvre*, explicitly mentioned in such works as *Mohô no Tensai*, or implicitly challenged in portrayals of the heroine at large in her affairs in *Sasu (To sting)*, *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi (Story of a certain woman)*, *Kôfuku (Happiness)*, and *Kono oshiroi ire (This powder box)*, among many others.

many other Taishô authors such as Tayama Katai in *Futon*, and Chikamatsu Shûkô in *Giwaku* (*Suspicion*, 1913) as well as in what has been called Chikamatsu's "Estranged Wife" cycle (of 1910-1915; Fowler), Uno also finds the narratives of a personal life worth telling. Fowler describes *shishôsetsu* displaying this interest in individualism as enabling an "avenue to spiritual independence in a society that placed severe constraints on interpersonal relations"(15). This is precisely the freedom called for and realized in Uno's plea for personal independence and her *shishôsetsu*. Moreover, confessional fiction characteristically features withdrawal, isolation, and self-contemplation. This genre would prove a particularly ideal literary vessel for the "embodiment of [the author's] uniqueness"(Fowler 15).⁷⁷ An analysis of the self in *Mohô no Tensai*, as well as in other early and later writing by Uno, will demonstrate the above awareness of individual liberty. Like other texts of masculine independence and liberty, the sense that the writer could literally walk out and expose his/her private parts in the *shishôsetsu* closely resembles Uno's literary acts of independence. Her written and read "I" must be considered an explicit engagement of society in a non-conformist challenge, or, at least as the "private" exhibition of nonconformism.

As discussed earlier of *shishôsetsu*, the private was exposed in a public arena. In disclosing "contemptible actions" and "shameful thoughts"(Keene 506) and illicit desires, Taishô and early Shôwa Japanese authors knew an arena ripe for (sexual) confession. A wide audience eagerly awaited Uno's serialized writing as well, exhibiting a desire more complex than that which Henry Louis Gates, Jr. finds present in contemporary America's penchant for tabloids: "What we really like to do is watch"(118), he states, but here there is

⁷⁷ Fowler notes also: "Individualism [came to] imply a withdrawal into the world of nature and private experience. This notion of individualism as a form of isolated self-contemplation may have been the only avenue to spiritual independence in a society that placed severe constraints on interpersonal relations"(15).

also the reader's active role in identification of possible worlds of the author, the recognition of personal desire, the possibility of engaging with the dissident voice, the affirmation of fissures in authority, and/or the reader's pleasure in complicit though private stimulation. Read in these many ways, Uno's narrations of "unseemly personal affairs" (Keene 506) hardly "stopping short of full revelation" (Keene 506), and which often treated and re-treated her personal relationships in public media, are not a simple public confession of a self entirely alien to its readers.

Uno's actual relationships experienced and exploited in narrative included those with: Fujimura Ryôichi (an arranged "marriage" to a cousin whom she left after a few days when she was 14); Fujimura Tadashi (banker/cousin, with whom she lived from 1916, and was married to between 1919 and 1922,); Ozaki Shirô (novelist, to whom she was married from 1923 to 1929); Tôgô Seiji (surrealist painter, with whom she lived from 1929 to 1934), and Kitahara Takeo (ten years her junior; a writer and scholar of French literature, with whom she was married from 1939 to 1964). Uno's rich personal relationships developed into many autobiographical stories. The events of her intimate relationships were also re-developed in retrospective re-tellings of her relationships, such as in *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a certain woman*, 1971),⁷⁸ *Watashi no bungakuteki kaisôki* (*My literary memoirs*, 1972),⁷⁹ and *Ikite yuku watashi* (*I will go on living*,

⁷⁸ This text represents Uno's life from early childhood in Iwakuni prefecture—her relationship with her father, her job as a teacher and the love affair which resulted in her dismissal—, to her wandering to Korea, Tokyo, and Hokkaido, her various jobs, her writing and marriage, and her meeting with Tôgô.

⁷⁹ Another retrospective of Uno's life and career in which she re-tells events, both actual and literary, of her past.

1982).⁸⁰ It is small wonder some find Uno's *oeuvre* characterized by themes of "love, parting, attachment, and desperation stemming from the relations between man and woman"(Lippert and Selden 282). As will be evident, Uno often treats personal, sexual relationships in her *writing of the body* and disclosure of self in fiction.

Below I demonstrate the literal movement Uno traces through her life-writing where, by chronicling her experiences through the men in her life, Uno's discursive motion between lovers and narratives accumulates into a sense of a "self" she is in her writing. *Michiyo no yomeiri* (*Michiyo goes to wed*, 1925) describes the torment of an impoverished daughter (read as the third-person narrative of the author's slightly younger self) by her idolized-yet-cruel father and his plan to marry her at an early age to her cousin, whom Uno actually married in 1911 at 14 years old.⁸¹ As will be evident from this beginning, the reader will become increasingly "familiar with the hero from previous texts that reported on the author's private life"(Fowler 67). The stories of Uno's liaisons throughout her life with men, told in various forms from her youth and through change, also include an early narrative treating her employment and eventual dismissal from an elementary school for an affair with a fellow teacher. This scandal of 1915, which was sketched in Uno's early writing, and which was also re-told later in *Jidenteki ren'ai ron* (*Record of my loves*, 1959) and in the third-person (Kazue) of both *Kôfuku* (*Happiness*, 1971) and *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a single woman*, 1971), found the young teacher Uno packing off to Korea after her dismissal for a love affair with her co-worker, only to return furious—and brandishing a knife—upon receipt of a letter from her lover asking her never to contact him again.

⁸⁰ Two volumes recounting events and individuals, her writing and criticism of her work over 84 years.

⁸¹ The marriage to her 17-year old cousin, Fujimura Ryôichi, lasted for 10 days. (She later marries another cousin Fujimura Tadashi in 1920; the marriage lasts two years.)

When this relationship dies and Uno re-settles in Japan, she eventually lives a students' life with her cousin Fujimura Tadashi in Kyoto from 1916 and then in Tokyo. She marries him in 1919. Uno's life with Fujimura is alluded to in narratives that, though not perhaps considered *shishôsetsu* by other critics, feature a protagonist who is a waitress near a university and who meets writers and editors, thus echoing Uno's own life experiences at her part-time job at Enrakuen café during this period. When her husband gets a position in Hokkaido, she writes, along with other stories of where her life has led her, *Atarashiki seikatsu e no shuppatsu* (*Leaving for a new life*), which originally appeared in the magazine *Fujin Kôron* (1928) and describes how she is eager to move again, to start a life in Hokkaido. Once in Sapporo, however, Uno again becomes restless: in 1929 she publishes the story *Tsukiyo no tayori* (*Moonlit night letters*) in which the last line reads, *Watashi wa jikinimou Tôkyô e kaeritai to omotte imasu*, "I think I'd like to return soon to Tokyo" (UCZ, 1:317).

Uno is apparently off to seek adventure solo again in Tokyo, and winds up in another man's arms; enter Ozaki Shirô, whom she also eulogizes in *Jidenteki ren'ai ron* (*Record of my loves*, 1959), and the (adulterous) happiness she finds with him before their marriage. On the point of leaving *him* for Tôgô Seiji, she will not only write about their tumultuous relationship and break-up in *Iro zange* (*Confessions of love*, 1933-1935), but will write increasingly of, and a desire for, independence.⁸² *Iro zange* is, of course, Uno's third-person story including an account of the sensational failed love suicide between Tôgô and his partner who had tried to slit their wrists together on the *futon*. The novel is thus also a narrative of the personal story Tôgô told Uno of his relationship with a rear-admiral's daughter just before Uno's arrival at their literally bloodied bed, and not,

⁸² cf. *Tsukuyo no tayori* (Moonlit night letter, 1929; UCZ 1:303-17), *Dokushin kurabu no hanashi* (Singles club story, 1930; UCZ 1:319-27); and *Aisubeki tsurukusa* (Vines which must love, 1930) mentioned earlier.

therefore, strictly personal fiction of the self. An autobiographical account of the *dénouement* of Tôgô's failed attempt and Uno's ongoing relationship together with him is, however, also recorded from a first-person point of view in *Kono oshiroi ire* (*This Powder Box*, 1967). Later, as mentioned, her relationship to Tôgô is treated in *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a certain woman*, 1971). As is apparent in the various re-tellings of her relationships, the "Uno" character with whom Taishô and early Shôwa society became familiar figures and re-figures in Uno's *shishôsetsu*.

The break-up of her relationship with her next husband Kitahara is represented in *Iku* (*Going*, 1961) and the short story in five parts, *Sasu* (*To stab*, or *To sting*) which appeared serially in *Shinchô* magazine: part I and II in 1963; parts III and IV in 1965; and part V in 1966. In *Sasu*, we read again of Uno's personal identity told in relation to others. The commodification of the author Uno as a public spectacle of an individual becomes apparent as Uno's original readers awaited the next serial disclosure of these narratives treating her relationship with her latest husband, Kitahara, and because the "I"-writing was accompanied also by the growing discourse surrounding Uno. This discourse pertained not only to *Style* magazine that Uno developed and edited from 1936 to 1944 and from 1946 to 1959,⁸³ and in which Kitahara had a part managing, but was also generated due to publicity surrounding the fashion store Uno began in the Ginza, by her continuous

⁸³ One of Japan's first fashion magazines, *Sutairu* [*Style* magazine] was closed by government order in 1944 in order to save paper. The articles and covers of *Style*, however, changed during World War II, reflecting the editor's response to censors and government austerity programs [the name of the magazine changed in 1941 from *Style* to the more "proper" *Josei seikatsu*, 'Woman's Life']. Nationalist interests were seen, for example, in the increased presentation of *kimono* versus Western fashions. In 1946, *Style* was revived and lasted until 1959, despite a tax audit of *Style-company* in 1952 that almost landed Kitahara, Uno's partner and then-husband, in jail for fraud.

publication of essays and personal opinions, and through the general figure Uno cut at large in Taishô and Shôwa Japan. Uno's literary and social rebellion, which was consistently represented in a non-conformist female character who crossed between her literary work and personal essays, thus also extended into the discourse and politics of fashion and modernization, particularly as it related to ideals from the West. On the pages of *Style* magazine, we again see the figure of *new woman* Uno personified in her writing: an independent woman, the *new woman* cover-girl is portrayed on a number of issues with blond hair, short hair, in pants, and in Western clothes from 1936 to 1944 as well as increasingly in bold-patterned *kimono* during the war years. This avant-garde fashion worn by the figure *new woman*, though perhaps dismissed as frivolous, could nonetheless be understood as political in a social context. Silverberg's remarks on the *new woman* figure that emerged in Japanese society are useful again to underline her significant political dimension:

[M]en and women writers of the popular press who talked about this new kind of woman believed that this cultural heroine was defining her own options and her own sexuality....This modern young woman transgressed by crossing boundaries erected by class, gender, and culture. Her resistance was usually not organized, but nevertheless it was political....[H]ers was the first voice of woman's resistance.(254)

The image above of the transgressive *new woman*, crossing boundaries erected by class, gender, and culture, and understood as a figure of woman's resistance, is similar to that which Uno verbally portrayed in her *shishôsetsu*, visually echoed on the pages of *Style* magazine, and literally presented for consumption in other writing and in real life. As such, the critical evaluation of Uno's popular writing as "scandalous"(Copeland 85) shows up the transgressive and rebellious nature of the modern girl Uno presented in her personal

literature. This “Uno” character, who spoke to liberation for men and women, also transgressed sexually and demanded sexual liberation and options for herself, if not for other women. Defying the ideology of the “good wife, wise mother,” woman’s sexuality and independence are demonstrated throughout Uno’s *shishôsetsu* writing career in her extended ritual of sex and pillow talk read through her steady, intimate self-revelations.

In Uno’s explicitly sexual *shishôsetsu*, the protagonists often portray the combination Suzuki points out, that of the “modern, educated, independent woman who emerged in the 1890s at the same time as the ideal of *ren’ai*, the romantic love between enlightened individuals”(167). *Ren’ai* was a romantic idealization of “love” apparently influenced by Christianity and individualism in modern Japan. This emancipated love was a theme taken up by men in personal, sexual confession, such as that we find in Katai’s *Futon*. The glorification of personal realization through love is also found in other male writers’ narrations of the “new woman,” who acts as either a devil or a conduit for the male’s self-expression, such as Arishima Takeo’s *Aru onna* (*A certain woman*)⁸⁴ of 1919. Notably, Futabatei’s *Ukigumo* (*Drifting clouds*, 1887-89) and Katai’s *Futon*, contemporary works also showing *new woman* characters as well as the “new” love relationships, formed the “serious” literature of the modern Japanese canon.⁸⁵ It is additionally remarkable that

⁸⁴ Uno’s retrospective autobiographical work *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a certain woman*), published in 1971, historically echoes the title and rebellious female character of Arishima’s *Aru onna* (*A certain woman*), but with a female speaking protagonist.

⁸⁵ These portrayals, moreover, have been rather more extensively studied than the female protagonist “new women” featured in women’s personal writing, by feminist as well as other critics of modern Japanese fiction. The character of the “modern girl,” an extension of “new woman,” receives similar critical attention in analyses, for example, of Tanizaki Jun’ichirô’s *Naomi* of *Chijin no ai* (*Naomi*, 1924). cf. also Maeda Ai, *Kindaibungaku no*

although these texts demonstrated an interest in the new emancipated woman, it is apparent that “She” was not truly an equal in relation to rights of the male nor was she a figure in an equal relationship of love.

“Woman” was simultaneously fetishized and a fabricated partner in the romanticization of “love” from a male viewpoint. *New woman* thus narrated remained an object of male desire, with male authors ultimately engaging the blind stratagems familiar to courtly love, that is, finding not “woman” but “Woman.” Sex and confession will be dealt with again in chapter five, though for the purpose of the present argument, by representing women’s changing spheres of activity and newly realized freedoms, Uno’s *shishôsetsu* treating “love” related the exploits and imagination of a female individual. As opposed to masculine presentations of the *new woman*, Uno voiced woman’s experience. Her writing might have been read also for its emancipatory role in Japan’s early feminist movement and interest in the modern subject, though her writings have not been read in a politicized feminist sphere nor in the literary and social/philosophical spheres. As for the discourse surrounding *shishôsetsu* and its critical enterprises, Uno would also have much to contribute for her depictions of a “real” sexually and emotionally emancipated female protagonist and relations of sexual, romantic love.

In a discussion related to modern women and idealization, Hijiya-Kirshnereit also remarks how “*shizenshugi* (Japanese Naturalist) literature does not transcend the limits set by the historical and social context in its portrayal of women. The subject of women finds increasing attention, but, while ‘modern’ women are cautiously idealized, the idealization is often revoked later”(25). As apparent in the institutional acceptance of “love stories” written by men, we can see how modern woman is fetishized in love though ultimately refused her own agency. Uno’s work can be understood, therefore, rather than as “a

onnatachi (*Women in contemporary literature*, 1995), who studies heroines in work by six novelists, mostly male: Higuchi Ichiyô (female author), Ozaki Kôyô, Mori Ogai, Arashima Takeo, Tanizaki Jun’ichirô, and Oka Shôhei.

cautious idealization of modern women,” as writing which directly treats themes related to the growing independence of real women in Taishô and early Shôwa Japan from a modern woman’s perspective. Though perhaps a rather unlikely feminist, Uno’s *shishôsetsu* writing definitely celebrates the individual through all her narrations of marriages and romantic liaisons, and attempts to illuminate human experience in the way of other male authors of *shishôsetsu*. Uno’s writing thus need not be critically circumscribed as “writing of a woman”: her *oeuvre* may also be considered for her contribution to notions of the modern Japanese subject, the individual, and the development of the *shishôsetsu*.

As will be more thoroughly examined in chapter five, the representation of *ren’ai* or romantic love common to men’s *shishôsetsu* was an important configuration through which not only women’s literary and social emancipation might be realized, but would act also as a major conduit for themes of Uno’s personal fiction. Indeed, Uno would write a whole discourse on the subject: *Jidenteki ren’ai ron* (*Record of my loves*, 1959). Unfortunately, as I will demonstrate, like *Seitô* which was publicly censored for promoting liberalized notions of “free love,” the political import of Uno’s transgressive *shishôsetsu* is often elided.

Ingenue Received

However innovative, Uno’s self-conscious production and the mass consumption of her self and writing would generally escape critical and literary acclaim. Whereas some of the lives presented by male authors of *shishôsetsu* resulted in both critical questioning of the values with which Taishô society was imbued, and contributed to the formulation of the genre *shishôsetsu* with its emphasis on the individual subject and his motivation, the private lives presented by Uno and other women writers in their *shishôsetsu* were largely critically ignored. Men’s *shishôsetsu* were often described as narrow, self-indulgent, and

simplistic, but women's Taishô/early Shôwa *shishôsetsu* were either classified as *jiden shôsetsu* rather than *shishôsetsu*, were relatively critically neglected, or have been described as narcissistic though simultaneously considered incapable of raising the same generic and philosophical issues brought forward by individual examples of men's writing. Recalling from the last chapter Ericson's description of the categorization of women's confessional literature as *jiden shôsetsu* versus the male counterpart *watakushi shôsetsu*, note Ericson's remark that: "only a few observers—such as Shintô Junko, who argued that literature labeled in a way that indicated it was written by women implied that the works were 'poor pieces of writing' (*dasaku*) or 'inferior pieces of writing' (*akusaku*)—have noted the negative connotations attributed, through this division, to 'women's writing'" (91).⁸⁶

The immediate categorization of 1920s women's confessional writing through an arbitrary division based on an author's gender clearly implied artistic or literary inferiority, and can be seen to have impacted the reception of Uno's writing. Like Taishô era texts written by men who themselves were sometimes personally criticized for their "cheap,

⁸⁶ With reference to my earlier discussion of women's writing, Ericson's additional observation is apt: "Women's literature as a distinct style of writing developed as a residual category, defined not so much by intrinsic criteria as by its relation to other principal conceptual distinctions in the criticism of the 1920's. Although some women writers wrote short, simple sentences and gave realistic, concrete portrayals of subjects near at hand, so did many men. The variability in language and style among individual male and female writers was at least as great as the presumed variability between the two groups. The boundaries of women's literature were thus demarcated by a set of conceptual antinomies, the pure and the popular, the confessional and the autobiographical. These oppositions were always imperfect, and allowances were made for exceptions. But their combined effect implicitly devalued the work of women writers as merely popular and aesthetically second-rate" (Ericson 91-93).

sordid tales”(Akagi Kôhei, in Fowler 149), and the ugly facts of the lives of the decrepit individuals they portrayed, criticism of Uno’s work illustrates the lack of critical, as well as narrative, distancing between actual author and subject. With this in mind, Schierbeck, Rebecca Copeland, and Yumiko Tanaka describe the pejorative treatment Uno’s writing received, but also themselves reinforce—perhaps unconsciously or unintentionally—this slide between critical evaluation of the personal fiction and critical valuation of the actual author, (her) gendered self. Tanaka describes Uno’s reception: “Known as a ‘modern woman’ for her colorful relationships with men, Uno’s notorious love life both enhanced and hampered her reputation as a writer”(183). Underlying the complicity of reading and writing between life and art in *shishôsetsu* is an intriguing extension: genre studies have not only tended to display a deliberate *conflation* between the *shishôsetsu* narrator/protagonist and his/her actual life because of the personality thematically portrayed in a text, but studies have also further made “critical” evaluation of a *shishôsetsu* author’s work *and* the author himself or herself based on the self exhibited.

Considering women’s self-exposé, Schierbeck’s observation below of Uno’s lack of success in the *bundan* also indicates how Uno’s writing was read and evaluated in light of her flamboyant personality and her well-publicized romantic career.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Yosano Akiko, an important literary figure of the Taishô era, published poet, and a contributor to *Seitô* from its inaugural edition, when she published *Verses in Idle Moments* [1911], also received criticism of a personal nature. From 1901, when *Midaregami* [*Tangled Hair*] was published, in which Yosano “celebrated the passion and sensuality of love from a woman’s point of view,” until around 1911 “when her prolific output of poetry, essays, and literary scholarship had secured her a place on the Meiji literary scene,” not unlike the reception Uno would experience, “Yosano was treated by her critics, artistic and political, as a rather notorious Meiji woman whose poetry was secondary to her unconventional behavior”(Sievers 169).

Unlike some of her sister writers, Uno did not write about the harsh life of the working class but about the inner struggles in relationships between the sexes. This gave her the reputation of being merely a writer of “love foolery.” Her earlier writing was discredited because of her involvements with several men and because she was an acknowledged beauty.(77)

As discussed earlier, Uno began publishing personal fiction, or writing “love foolery” according to this description, from an early age in the 1920s. Her writing, as described by Schierbeck, differed obviously from the writing of Miyamoto Yuriko, Hirabayashi Taiko, and Sata Ineko, among other contemporary women writers, for example, some of whom were part of the *Tenkô* (political conversion), Proletarian, or socialist literary movement of the 1920s and 1930s that treated the life of the working class. Uno tends to focus on experiences from her own life which largely concern “fashionable” ways of living and the relationship between the sexes.

Comparing Uno with women writers who were overtly politically engaged, and therefore institutionally or critically recognized, neglects in part the purpose and arguable success of her personal enterprise. Like other publicly disengaged writers of *shishôsetsu* who explored the private versus public and political, and who believed in the aesthetic examination of the intimate, “actual” life through objective representation and sexual confession, Uno also deliberately chose to minutely examine and portray her own life in modern Japan. She was not necessarily nor overtly intending engagement with Japan’s institutionalized political sphere, choosing to articulate rather the intricacies of familial, personal, and sexual relations and the author’s position in modern Japanese society both as a young writer and a female individual.

With regard to the trans-cultural, sexual, and gendered body and experience narrated in Uno’s *shishôsetsu*, the “Uno” literary figure could be viewed as one “defining

her own options and her own sexuality”(Silverberg 254). As such, Uno’s female protagonists can not be ignored for their murmurings of individual resistance and the threat “she” poses to notions of the “patriarchal family and its ideological support, the deferring woman who was presented in state ideology as the ‘Good Wife and Wise Mother’”(Silverberg 252). Uno’s independent figure of “author” that readers confront in her *shishôsetsu* is interpellated and interpreted together through other public media surrounding her “I.” The political dissension that her character suggests may not be obviously politically engaged.⁸⁸ However, she is a figure who unmistakably and continuously challenges the beliefs of *onna daigaku*, the “women’s education” she had received, as well as other social behavioral constraints.

Other critics pre-empt this political nature of Uno’s work, evaluating Uno’s literary achievement in terms largely circumscribed by the literary institution, itself a gendered construction. Copeland makes the observation that Uno

will most likely not be counted among the major writers in the literary pantheon; she lacks the breadth of a Natsume Sôseki, or the poetry of a Kawabata Yasunari. But then, Uno never really intended to be a literary heavyweight. Dreams of such magnitude were beyond the realm of imagination for women of her generation. Even those who did approach writing with more apparent seriousness will have a difficult time finding a place alongside the likes of Sôseki and Kawabata. Women’s writing at the time was simply not accorded the same value as men’s. Women who did “attempt the pen” were regarded more as anomalies than as serious writers, and more often than not they were thought to be slightly scandalous.

⁸⁸ In at least one case in Uno’s early work, *Haka wo abaku* (*Opening the grave*), however, a socialist literary influence gaining popularity in the era of Taishô democracy is apparent.

But Uno very cleverly manipulated the prejudice and suspicion that surrounded intelligent, outspoken women during the early twentieth century. She subverted the *status quo* and used her femaleness to her advantage by turning what the world saw as scandal into personal profit.(85)

Whether or not Uno intended herself to be a “literary heavyweight” is moot. True, women’s writing was not accorded the same significance as that which male writers received, and true, Uno’s stylistic and artistic innovation may be found lacking in some respects. Further, Uno did develop a “scandalous”⁸⁹ reputation, though her reputation based on intimate and sexual relations with a number of men arguably rivals the reputation of other famous male *shishôsetsu* authors in Japan, such as Tsushima’s father Dazai Osamu, who tried to commit love suicide three times with different women, failed only twice, and wrote about the eventually infamous events in his personal writing. What is significant in Copeland’s assessment is that she seems satisfied with the judgment of Uno’s literary merit on the grounds that she does not write like a Kawabata or Sôseki, too readily assuming their style, choice of subjects and genre, their canonical position, established audience, and chosen aesthetic definitive. Further, even though Uno’s writing may not be considered work which pushes the far boundaries of innovative literary schools and form, it is also significant that Uno did not belong to a literary “school” or *bundan* which accorded authority and respectability to its own authors and their works. Though her *shishôsetsu* have been considered more popular literature for the masses, and circulated widely in serials as such, Copeland sees Uno’s literary success in terms of this high canon, and then only as Uno’s ability to parlay gendered writing into a sphere of public acceptance, scandal, and profit.

⁸⁹ I use Copeland’s adjective for its moral and censorial implication.

In a related evaluation of Uno's literary success that demonstrates particular systemic powers of the literary institution, Schierbeck states that the first work by Uno acknowledged by the *bundan*, "her first significant novel," (77) was *Iro zange* (*Confessions of Love*). But what had led previously to the dismissal or marginalization of Uno's *oeuvre* of largely personal writing as that featuring "the inner struggles in relationships between the sexes," with *Iro zange* became sanctioned, thus giving rise to some questions. Is this particular work artistically better than Uno's other earlier work? Was the work simply well-received in the specific literary climate at the time of its publication, or had her early work infiltrated the institution to the point of public recognition with this work? Or, was *Iro zange* somehow more palatable to members of the literary *bundan* because it focused on the suicidal love affair of a (well-known) man and his lover that had been reported in newspapers, rather than on one of Uno's own?

These generically invested questions which suggest particular interests of the literary institution are answered only in part by Tanaka's observation that "at once lyrical and intellectual, the novel is significant for its accurate portrayal of Japanese society during the late 1920s—a time of instability and confusion—as well as for its female protagonists who insist on choosing their own futures yet still lack the means to financial independence" (186). Judging from this critic's evaluation of "one of the finest novels treating the theme of love in the pre-World War II period" (186), the success of *Iro zange* apparently also involves the non-*shishôsetsu*-like character of the novel and its wider social engagement rather than the wider acceptance of Uno's personal writing—even while the novel explores the emergent sense of the independent woman. The fact that this text is pivotal toward Uno's institutional acceptance raises the issue of the pre-World War II critical literary valuation of women's *shishôsetsu*, and of the importance accorded women's individual experience and lives. Though obviously difficult to answer, these concerns at least point to ways in which early twentieth-century Japanese literary history was shaped by the *bundan*, and how, even though women penetrated the *bundan*

occasionally, as well as almost vicariously through relationships to men or male authors in the *bundan*,⁹⁰ women's writing of the self generally would remain critically marginalized.

Returning to the evaluative conflation between literature and the author, Copeland's remarks are again significant: "Initially I was distressed by the lack of appreciation for Uno Chiyo's literary accomplishments.... But later I came to understand that this skewed perception of Uno was not so much a result of the quality of her works, which few would dispute, but of the content of her life" (*Story*, vii). It was shown earlier that not unlike the maligned reception of Uno's *oeuvre* as a "result" of her life, Katai and other Taishô writers also had received personal criticism. *Futon* was described alternately as a "narcissistic monologue" (Nakamura Mitsuo, in Suzuki 69) and as a work of "bold and outspoken confession of a man of the flesh" (Shimamura Hôgetsu, in Suzuki 70), both evaluations of the literature via a reading of the real author behind it, and, conversely, implying an estimation of the author's moral character via the text. Uno's writing, however, might have been discredited or vilified as the literary and fashionable self-indulgence of a woman or a *new woman* by her contemporary *shishôsetsu* critics, readers, writers, and the *bundan*, many of which seemed to forgive simultaneously the personal "over-indulgence" of their modern male counterparts.

This gender discrimination present in evaluations of Uno and her writing is not an isolated incident. *Seitô*'s lack of success also demonstrates the mitigated critical reception of women's writing, and Sharon L. Seivers significantly notes the general public interest shown toward the personalities behind *Seitô*, rather than in their literature, with the following:

Yosano's [Akiko] contributions to *Bluestocking*, along with those of Tamura Toshio, brought it a measure of literary credibility and critical attention,

⁹⁰ Amino Kiku, also a disciple of Shiga, is an example of this infiltration into the *bundan*.

but not enough to guarantee serious consideration of the journal and its young, unpublished writers by Japan's literary establishment. The first issue of *Bluestocking* was less a literary than a news event; Tokyo newspapers spent more time discussing the new "women's journal" than the literary establishment did, a harbinger of a public more interested in the journal's ideas and personalities than in its art.(169)⁹¹

Yosano's, Tamura's, and other women's writing in Taishô Japan seems to have been treated as unique and as a curiosity because it was the product of women, of more interest for its elsewhere fetishized *new woman* and early feminist figures than for its literary narratives which in no uncertain terms featured women's "I's," the actual "new women." Nonetheless, neither their "credible" writing nor Uno's "profitable" *shishôsetsu* raised, as stated earlier, the same generic possibilities and concerns individual men's I-writing seemed to involve.

In light of sexual confession and sense of self, more specifically, a further difference exists between the critical attention male authors received and Uno's lack of recognition in the *shishôsetsu* circle as well as the fate of *Seitô* authors. Seivers states that "male writers, the naturalists in particular, had already encountered substantial public hostility around these same issues [of individualism], but where they might use rejection to validate their art, the Bluestockings found it more and more difficult to focus solely on art, rejecting politics"(170). Unlike the male writers of *shishôsetsu* whose rejection reinforced and justified their focus on the individual and intimate body, *Seitô* writers, on the other

⁹¹ Seivers adds: "*Bluestocking* carried, from the beginning, a burden too large for any brave new literary magazine. Expected to open doors to women who had been denied access to the literary world on their own merits, the journal was also expected to carry on the feminist struggle in the absence of other standard bearers"(170).

hand, seemed forced into an expanded and overtly political sphere *because* they were publishing work and writing by women. This eventually led the magazine and its contributors to a stronger sense and portrayal of a feminist consciousness while, at the same time, the aesthetic innovation of I-writing by women was marginalized.

The critical move away from more literary concerns and toward a situation involving political and feminist spheres that *Seitô* experienced shares a parallel with, and a startling difference from, the reception of Uno's writing. Like the *Seitô* writers, Uno was received as a *female* public figure. Because her writing often portrays a female protagonist, and because the views expressed in the fiction tended to correspond with other writings by Uno and about her, Uno's work was instantaneously received and commodified by the public and cultural establishment as the writing of a particular woman. However, there seemed an elitist aesthetic which did not credit Uno's popular personal fiction—though it was serialized often in magazines with a wide readership—with the weight of writing by *bundan* members or “serious” male writers of personal fiction. At another level, then, and contrary to the reception of Uno's writing, a certain gender-invested “seriousness” was accorded to the *Seitô* writers. That is, other critics would critically recognize the merit in the women's writing in *Seitô*, particularly that displayed by the proletarian writers, or its high aesthetic achievement otherwise ascribed to artistically and stylistically challenging writers such as Yosano. Uno's *writing of the body* ultimately would be ignored institutionally on both these fronts for its more ambivalent feminist, political, and aesthetic intent.

I argue that Uno's social engagement with the public through “apolitical” confessional fiction, her wide acceptance by the general but not the institutional readership, and her decision to write personal fiction perpetually under the public eye, regardless of whether or not she intended it for a specific feminist or political sphere, make her writing political. Her *writing of the body* is political because the body's very representation in literature discursively implies the different forms of social and institutionalized authority

within which and under which the (female) body of the writer inescapably circulates. In this light, it is useful also to re-read the reprehension expressed by the proletarian writer Miyamoto Yuriko, who indicted both Hayashi Fumiko and Uno Chiyo as women writers (*fujin sakka*) who embraced the progressive spirit only for personal advancement and not for larger political or aesthetic interests. Miyamoto saw their work as overly individualistic and, at the same time, pandering to issues of gender. She argues that both Hayashi and Uno postured as “women writers” and shamelessly promoted their gender to secure press coverage and titillate consumers. “The success that they gained as a result served instead to create the boundaries of their literature.” (Miyamoto Yuriko, “*Fujin no bungaku: kindai nihon no fujin sakka*.” Tokyo, *Jitsugyo no nihonsha*, 1947:178, quoted in Ericson 99)

The widespread approbation of Miyamoto’s position outlined here, that the autobiographical fiction of women writers like Hayashi and Uno would limit the critical parameters of their own reception, seems borne out by the lack of critical acclaim Uno, for one, received. What is noteworthy is Miyamoto’s implication that Uno and Hayashi postured as women writers, and manipulated public interest in their gender with their own profit, press coverage, and stimulation of the public in mind. The moral implications of such a personal criticism as Miyamoto’s are augmented, furthermore, should Uno’s and Hayashi’s literary subjects have garnered such gender-inflected public attention, and the public’s interest and fetishization of this female subject remain completely uninvestigated.

Contrary to Miyamoto’s indictment of writers who exploited their gender, I argue that in subtler, no less political ways, Uno, like Hayashi in *Hôrôki* (*Diary of a Vagabond*, 1928-30), does not reinforce prescribed roles of female domesticity, nor what could be construed as established literary mores, and that it is precisely in avoiding these social and literary expectations that a sense of the unique individual in modern Japan is most unambiguously cemented. Moreover, both female authors embrace wandering, explore individual (woman’s) experience, interrogate gender, class, and cultural relations between individuals, as well as raise social and political issues. As such, they unmistakably

question not only the fixed identity of the modern Japanese subject in the cultural and literary establishment but also that of “Woman” present in the literary institution.

As an early contemporary of Uno also considered to follow the “*roman-à-clef*” style of *watakushi shôsetsu*” writing (Ericson 97),⁹² Ericson’s remarks on Hayashi’s success are relevant also to this discussion of Uno’s texts. “Having made herself a public figure, she wrote for an audience that wanted to learn more about her.... [in a style] similar to works by other confessional writers who revealed their humiliating exploits and flights of fancy to a well-informed audience and were under public scrutiny by choice”(98). Ericson’s observation here helps us finally to rejoin the earlier discussion of Itô’s and Fowler’s remarks on the relation between the critical success of the work and the identifiable “person” of the autobiographical writer who chooses to be under public scrutiny. As readers given a “key” will “want to learn more” about the author, and the author has this in mind, the “I” is both produced and commodified in the sense that it becomes a token of commerce between the writer and the audience who identifies the author, that is, a subject’s “actual” experience in his or her writing. The commodification of the authorial body visible in the reception of Uno’s I-fiction is operative as well, of course, in the criticisms of Uno’s presumed literary goals that feature her body as publicizing, profiting, pandering, or posturing as a woman. These sorts of readings of the *shishôsetsu* subject underscore ways in which *shishôsetsu* is always, regardless of gender, a genre that will involve both corporeal and discursive readings and writings of the body. Personal fictions such as Uno’s, that speak to common and individual matters like all other canonized *shishôsetsu*, show how the readers’ projected desire to isolate the individual subject and the author’s manipulation/choice of literary forms for his/her own purposes not

⁹² For an exploration of Hayashi Fumiko’s “textual self,” see also Janice Brown, “Hayashi Fumiko: Voice from the Margin,” *Japan Quarterly* 43 (Jan-Mar 1996): 85-99.

only depend on established strategies of representation and truth in the cultural market but also rely on the actual body.

Never penetrating fully the discourse of *shishôsetsu* criticism, Uno's literary popularity remained largely dependent on the public's fascination with the *new woman* and nonconformist gender attitudes she played out in her *shishôsetsu*. The wholesale dissemination of the idea of a modern, male subject and experience therefore can be seen to occur at the expense of subverting certain "other" potentially dissident voices, bodies, and subjects presented in I-fiction, particularly the voices of the female individual in *shishôsetsu* who participates in different ways in the economy surrounding I-fiction. As demonstrated above, rather than critical acceptance, Uno enjoyed celebrity status in a sort of generically insupportable cult of individualism, which depended nonetheless on the continuing sale of her personality—for almost eighty years—through her books, articles, and short stories. In this way having thus recognized the physical and gendered nature of the body of Uno's writing and reception, I turn now to the cumulative, discursive "I" of Uno's *shishôsetsu* apparent in the author's creation of self over time and space. The reflexivity of Uno's acknowledgement of the public in her mirror-writing will be investigated in the last section of this chapter.

These Boots are Made for Walking: Itineracy and the Modern Woman

The figure of *new woman* present in Uno's earliest writing is, as mentioned, precursor to the *modern girl*, a figure famous for her legginess and one who emerged in late Taishô–early Shôwa. Daughter of *new woman*, this pre-World War II figure of Japanese woman is newly independent and unfettered in the latest Western styles which daringly showed her legs. *Modern girl* is thus a useful metaphor to follow through Uno's autobiographical fiction from Taishô, through Shôwa, into the post-World War II period.

Beginning her narrative “I” travel in early works, Uno’s *shishôsetsu* develop an aggressively independent autobiographical subject who travels both figuratively and literally from her birthplace in Iwakuni prefecture to Korea, to Hokkaido and Tokyo, to Europe and the United States, and back again. The wandering body Uno thus presents, as one that resists behavioral, psychological, and personal as well as geographical confinement, illustrates also an accumulation of experience and an identity developed over the course of her life and through narratives of her multiple marriages and other liaisons.

Earlier, Uno’s personal story *Mohô no Tensai* was shown to represent not only the protagonist beginning to come into a literary sense of self, but also an instance of life-writing toward establishing Uno’s independence against her former self who had “read the books [her] husband read and used his pen to write [her] stories.” In this *shishôsetsu*, as will be evident in other work, Uno explores self-inscription in writing, inscriptions of authority on her body, and, in addition, narrates her growing need for personal liberty. The independence of the *new woman/modern girl* Uno narrates in this story *Genius of Imitation* is formed not only in and against consecutive relations with her partners and husbands, but also earlier on within the historical context of tensions between her and her father, the earliest embodiment of tradition and oppression she defies.

In the beginning of her repeated play on an Oedipal narrative trajectory, Uno’s father is reckoned with over and over, not only as a forbidding presence in *Mohô no Tensai* above, but also with his earlier entrance in *Kokyô no ie* (*Hometown house*, 1925; UCZ 1:229-43) and as a threat in *Michiyo no yomeiri* (*Michiyo goes to wed*, 1925). The most ineradicable image in the short story *Michiyo goes to wed*, which is narrated again over forty years later in *Story of a Certain Woman*, is that of the protagonist’s father’s tragic death. This scene presents the miserable, isolated, abusive-yet-idolized father coughing up blood on the snow outside his home while brandishing a knife to threaten any passer-by who may intervene in his suffering. His daughter looks on, horrified, but perhaps also

anticipating release from the pain he has brought her in life even while acknowledging her proximity to patricide as she stands by observing his death.

Matching Uno's geographical movement with her transposing sense of who she is and comes to be, this image of her father's knife crosses Uno's mind again. On her way back from Korea, she considers holding a blade to her ex-lover, a teacher with whom she has had a relationship leading to her dismissal from work and who had refused afterward to acknowledge her. The recurring image of a knife, blood on the snow, and the extremity of human circumstance of the original death scene in addition prefigures the (historically) later, and equally indelible, image of Uno's lover's botched love suicide narrated in at least three places, *Confessions of Love*, *This powder box* and *Story of a Certain Woman*. As mentioned with this scene, to which Uno returns again and again, Tôgô and his former lover had tried to kill themselves together, and the blood stains of a month earlier remain on the sheets of the *futon* now warm from Uno's own recent intercourse with Tôgô. Together, these images of love, blood, and the knife yield up a personal trope of Uno's passage from her father and between men, in her relationships, and into the starkly narrated interstices of life, murder, and death.

This constellation of life, murder, and death may be read also in *Sasu* (*To sting*, or *To stab*) and in its embedded narrative of the scorpion and the turtle. The inserted narrative describes the inevitable and deadly impulse of a scorpion who begs for a ride across the water on a turtle. After promising not to sting the turtle, the scorpion does, ensuring their mutual end, and then explains: "because it is in my nature." Uno relates this parable while recounting in the main narrative the recklessness with which the protagonist (Uno) had tried to publish a currently failing magazine, namely *Style* magazine, a foolishness which also extends to her newly arrived at understanding of her own deluded presence in a relationship with her husband (Kitahara) who has not wanted her for years. Stinging or stabbing, Uno narrates a dance of death implying her own complicity because

it is “in her nature,” while also acknowledging the presence of fate in this poisonous and destructive matching of man and woman.

Yet another aspect of “nature,” “complicity,” and “relationship” can be seen in an ambiguous rape scene re-told in *Story of a Certain Woman*. Early in Kazue’s (Uno’s) life, before her love affair with the teacher, she is told that the son of the headman of the village of Katagouchi wishes to make her his wife. Socially obligated not to refuse such a match, Kazue finds herself alone in a small room with him, making a meal for him as if she were his wife. When he eventually pins her down, she does not scream nor run away.

She felt as if she were the one holding herself down. She did not resist. She lay beneath the man like an animal, wanting to see with her very own eyes just what it was he would do to her. She did not want to marry, and yet was it this and this alone for which she hungered? And then it was over before she knew what it was that had ended. Is this what is meant by the union between a man and a woman?(Trans. Copeland 52)

It is social obligation which pins Kazue down as much as physical force in the intercourse above. Whether their loveless union is the resultant violence of brute authority and its victim, or is the violence of desire for experience on the part of the protagonist, the numbingly objective narrator of the story supplies no answer. Kazue desires independence and knowledge: is “rape” a consequence of her choice? Does she accept? Does she use the opportunity as a means to her own ends? Left ambiguous, it is nonetheless certain that individual experience and individual liberty are desired and the consequences are brutal, anarchic, but also suffered and accepted. We witness here the emergence of personal agency as a product of this rape—and *this* “birth” is radically violent. Moreover, it is notable that this birth is not the offspring of the kind of union between man and woman in the “traditional heterosexual economy” discussed by Ariga earlier in the context of typical

“romantic” narratives, but traces the identity and experience of a certain woman through all types of destructive and fruitful heterosexual liaisons. With these such “romantic” and violent relationships with men as the battleground over which the struggle for emancipation of the female protagonist takes place, Uno’s writing should not be read inconsequential to considerations of *shishôsetsu*. In this sense, then, like Kazue/Uno we as readers accept that, whether good or bad, experience is desirable in its affirmation of personal independence, thus presenting a subject that incontrovertibly demands generic consideration.

The various life/murder/death motifs re-told in Uno’s retrospective *shishôsetsu*, namely *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a certain woman*, 1971) and *Ikite yuku watashi* (*I will go on living*, 1982-83), are also materially present in Uno’s other earlier *writing of the body* treating the death of her mother, her step-mother, and their poverty. As noted particularly in relation to the abusive father and his death, the reader senses Uno’s tension-filled desire to remain independent of authoritative bodies, from which, and like death, Uno yet realizes the simultaneous impossibility of her escape in both her movement and re-writing of them. The trope of itineracy is useful therefore to look at Uno’s re-writing of her passage through relationships, time, and geography. Not simply an over-riding point of access for her narratives, Uno’s singular motion through a widening frontier of relationships, over time, and across expanding territory is also a motion of the avoidance and penetration of a singular identity through human barriers, time, and space. In effect, this body’s itineracy is also evidence of a political interest in broadening the experience of the female individual beyond the traditional confines of husband, home, and hearth. In addition, the reader begins to see Uno’s narrated body emerge in these relationships with the creation of an emancipated subject that is mutable and unfixed.

The itinerant protagonist is not uncommon to Japanese literature. Noriko Mizuta, in her study of Hayashi’s “wandering woman” in *Ukigumo* (*Drifting Clouds*), also remarks that “many Japanese writers, within the process of modernization that treated them as

marginal in society, made themselves the main subjects of their works through the genre of 'I-fiction' (*watakushi shôsetsu*), the dominant form of fiction in the early twentieth century. Rejected by society, these writers rejected society in turn and adopted an ideology of wandering" (331-32).⁹³ On the theme of escape from modern, capitalist society and wandering narrated in modern Japanese *shishôsetsu*, Mizuta also makes another useful observation: the "theme of wandering in modern Japanese literature, however, clearly has a gendered difference. For women, wandering presupposes living outside the institution of marriage...A woman's wandering thus signified her separation from the culture's definition of 'woman'" (332).⁹⁴ For the purposes of the present study, wandering, which is *not* aimless as might be implied, may be read in different ways: one, as an exercise of individual liberty featuring deliberate (spatial) dispersion; two, as a political or ideological gesture signified by (more abstract) defiance; and three, as a psychoanalytic/epistemological issue evidenced by escape, penetration and opening, that is the search for individuation, knowledge, and self-knowledge.

Uno's narrated wandering, written through representations of her many liaisons, and apparent in the narration of a self simultaneously within *and* outside the institution of marriage enforced in patriarchal culture, was politically, even morally, transgressive. Apparently, a wandering woman could not be a "good wife/wise mother." Nor does Uno apparently desire to be. Uno's *shishôsetsu*, treating a liberated, itinerant *new woman/modern girl* of Taishô and Shôwa society, went beyond geographical, political,

⁹³ She then cites the examples of Nagai Kafu, Kaneko Mitsuharu, Dazai Osamu, Shiga Naoya, stating that "many of these authors made the spirit of being outside the system the basis of the act of writing" (332).

⁹⁴ Mizuta mentions three women writers who nonetheless risk wandering: Tamura Toshiko, Hirabayashi Taiko, and Hayashi Fumiko (332).

moral, epistemological,⁹⁵ even cultural boundaries of acceptance and of “Woman,” yet—or perhaps thus—the “Uno” character was popular. Her “I” writing continued to be embraced by readers, which is a significant indication that individual lives and individual emancipation was desired by individuals under and within the same institutions of authority against which Uno narrated the life of an individual.

Moreover, the understanding of men’s and women’s wandering as a literary response to the “process of modernization that treated them as marginal in society”(Mizuta 332) enables us to see a remarkable parallel between the nature of wandering versus stability and development, and the narratological use of broken narration versus plot. I will re-examine this parallel in a study of Tsushima’s writing, as well as in chapter five, though it is imperative here to note that by adopting “an ideology of wandering,” the gesture of I-novelists can also be seen to reject, or at least confront, in a sense, two different notions of progress. In the first sense, the itinerant woman will not be part of the patriarchal foundation of the family. In the second sense, it should be noted that the I-novel ultimately is, of course, open-ended and narratologically unintegrated. Because an author can not, presumably, write his/her own death, nor does he/she live a “plotted” life, I-novels have been recognized historically as “plotless.”⁹⁶ In both ways demonstrating the nomadic nature of identity and personal narration, Uno’s writing is also importantly read through the crises implied in the search for self, identity, and knowledge in the Japanese and the modern literary landscape that other I-novelists traditionally explore as well. Clearly, wandering is undertaken in response to forms of authority exercised on the individual: it is also in itself an historically new actualization of a form of personal agency for the

⁹⁵ I use “epistemological” to refer not only to the idea of knowledge and self-knowledge expressed above, but also to the realms of women’s spheres of activity and men’s knowledge traditionally associated with specific genders.

⁹⁶ Notably in the “Novel without Plots Debate” between Tanizaki and Akutagawa.

individual from the turn of the century. Thus, even while the realization of individual agency held specific historical implications for the modern Japanese subject, for women writers of the early twentieth century as well as later contemporary authors, wandering held the additional implication that nomadism would continue to be read as a movement against the patriarchy.

Uno's stories chronicle transition and transgression, and the liberalization of an independent, if at times lonely, lustful, pathetic, happy, or desperate, female character. As read through the literary career of the "Uno" character, liberalization and identity come to equal elusive "happiness." Though the title implies culmination and its theme success, in Uno's short story *Kôfuku* (*Happiness*, 1971 version), we find yet another "moment of self" and wandering narrated. The fragmentation and speed of this narrative of *Happiness*, in which the protagonist "Kazue" recounts her eleven homes and multiple marriages to date,⁹⁷ echo the itineracy and restlessness of the character. Though some might interpret Uno's *Happiness* as the achievement of "happiness" the speaker even implies it is,⁹⁸ the elusive nature of "happiness" begs to be read against Uno's continual re-writing on the theme. Re-writing happiness occurs even more frequently toward the end of her career, thus further paralleling the creation and re-creation of happiness, identity and self in Uno's *shishôsetsu* over a long and lustrous life.

Karatani's discussion of the modern novel in Japan, as it relates to Uno's itinerant and discursive narration, as well as what will be investigated in the next section as refracted identity, is useful here. According to him, *shishôsetsu*

⁹⁷ Uno's narration of self thus also seems to, in this way, prescribe to the pattern of other women's autobiography according to Estelle Jelinek, which she finds is "episodic and anecdotal, nonchronological and disjunctive"(xiii).

⁹⁸ cf. Copeland (75-76).

deals with the space of concrete family ties rather than with society as a homogeneous space and depicts a precognitive realm of feelings and perceptions rather than the “I” as defined in relation to such a society. Consequently, the *shishôsetsu* form is fundamentally antagonistic to “construction,” in such a manner that even nineteenth-century Western novels could appear “impure” or “vulgar.” What is paradoxical is that in Japan this movement which was so contrary to “literature” should have come to constitute “pure literature” or *junbungaku*. Yet where does this aversion come from? It is obviously from an aversion to the configuration of linear perspective, to the conception of transcendental meaning or vanishing point. (Karatani 154)

Though I argue against Karatani in my earlier statement that the “I” is also defined in relation to society, the discursive nature of the self Uno presents, through the itinerant (re-) construction of identity, as well as through presentations of “concrete ties” and “feelings” over many years in her *shishôsetsu oeuvre*, illustrates what Karatani calls “an aversion to linear perspective and to the conception of transcendental meaning and vanishing point” with respect to the construction of identity *and* to the construction of the *shishôsetsu* narrative. In contrast to the authoritative “I” implicitly sought by previous genre definitions, as mentioned in earlier chapters featuring the “modern” “Japanese” “subject”, what is significant to note here is how the individual body is discursively developed and re-developed throughout Uno’s *shishôsetsu* career. An aversion to transcendental meaning and closure in *shishôsetsu*, as well as closure in the construction of identity, is common to the work of both Uno and Tsushima, whose writing I study next, as well as other I-novelists more generally, as I conclude.

Considering the “I” discursively created and re-created in Uno’s *shishôsetsu*, Ericson’s observation on Hayashi’s *oeuvre* contains a provocative suggestion for readings of Uno’s work. She states that many of Hayashi’s “ostensibly autobiographical

works...were clearly fictional [such that] one cannot help but view at least some of her later autobiographies as calculated to dissemble the details of her life”(109 n). Hayashi apparently “had a tendency to reinvent herself to fit the times”(ibid.), which is, of course, an impediment to isolating autobiographical writing if one looks for an authentic, integrated self in I-narratives. In reading Uno’s *oeuvre* of autobiographical writing, on the other hand, one can find enough trace or *consistency* between narratives to encourage a sustained reading of a particular autobiographical body, even while this body may be contradicted as it revolves between one story and another. Throughout her life, Uno would treat incidents which became well-known from the discursive history of her personal life. In this sense, then, though Uno created a mutable subject shifting through relationships in her *shishôsetsu*, essays, articles about her, as well as her general presence, her later autobiographies might be read as calculated to *assemble*, or re-fit, rather than “dissemble” the details of her life despite Uno’s shared “tendency to reinvent herself to fit the times.”

This labor of assembling an individual discursive body accumulated via other discourse on the author is also apparent more generally in Uno’s own use of literary works. Even from the formative *A Genius of Imitation*, where the influence of literature on the young artist Uno is apparent, Uno describes her father as a character from “Dostoevsky or Balzac”(trans. Tanaka 190), writes how she met “people who wrote novels in which lovers talked like city people”(ibid. 191), and was “in love like the characters in the stories in the typset magazine she had published”(ibid. 192). More significant to the Uno character as author, however, the protagonist also wonders if she will become a writer like Hiratsuka Raichô, Yamakawa Kikue, or Chyûjyô Yuriko (ibid. 193), like Takayama Chyogyû, Strindberg, Satomi Ton, or Chekhov, or even like Tamura Toshio, George Sand, or Uno’s then writer/husband, Ozaki (ibid. 194-95). As Uno even states: “I first sought a model, and then tried to become ‘like’ that person”(ibid. 193). Apparently, Uno has been informed by, and reads herself as formed by, and of, art. All such literary references are indicative also of the author’s self-conscious cross-over between life and art in the production of self. This

cross-over is evident as well in Uno's *Watashi no tokugi* (*My special ability*, 1963; UCZ 10:78-82), *Watashi no shôsetsu sahô* (*My novel-writing manner*, 1965; UCZ 10:86-88), and *Joryû sakka to iu koto* (*Saying 'woman writer'*, 1967; UCZ 10:122-24), to name only a few of Uno's works in which she recognizes discourse and the author's relation to the productive act of "self." Similar to the way Uno finds her "self" in relation to others' writing, she will also insert herself into her own fiction and writing, inscribing and re-inscribing her self as an individual, as an independent woman, and as an author over the course of her accumulated writings.

As I have shown in this study of Uno's wandering as well as of her narration and re-telling of fragmentary experiences, Uno's created "I" parallels a discursive invention of identity. An "Uno" body emerges from relationships to other individuals and to other textual works. In addition, we begin through the above to see ways in which the "I" of life and art also may be understood to be intimately related to the social environment within which it is produced. What Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck describe as the "duplicitous and complicitous relationship of 'life' and 'art' in autobiographical modes"(12-13) may be seen foregrounded in Uno's *shishôsetsu*: Namely, life informs Uno's autobiographical art, and, better still, art informs her life. With respect to the creation and relation of the itinerant self and identity and the wider realm of art (discourse), real life, and society, it is significant that the life/art co-operation not only involves the activity of the actual individual author, but also incorporates the audience reading the autobiographical fiction of an actual person, which also helps to form the ground against which the individual realizes its difference. Various aspects of this idea of art informing life will be examined further in the next section on Uno's mirror-writing and her social self-consciousness. This relation between art and life, discourse and actuality, fiction and fact will prove fascinating as we acknowledge that despite the private self of all *shishôsetsu* authors, the narration is necessarily, whether inadvertently or deliberately, engaged in the social sphere because of the reading audience, perception of an "I," and the self-conscious nature of the

writing/writer who “knows” it is read. Uno did not often specifically address societal contradictions, economic conditions, literary or philosophical questions at length, nor even through interrogating her marginalized position despite her popularity. However, as the social nature of this private fiction of identity is elaborated in the following discussion, we will begin to see how Uno’s various *shishôsetsu* are works written for and in the public eye. The idea that Uno’s personal fiction is constructed in a public domain, and *by* the public domain, will thus also form a significant landmark toward reconsidering the subject in the genre *shishôsetsu*, when *writing of the body* will be discussed again in chapter five.

Uno’s Visible/Lisible Happiness, 1917-1996: Taking a “Spectator’s Stance”

The author seems unable to write except in a way that suggests a personal involvement in his material. He lacks objectivity and is incapable of universalizing his predicament. He attempts to observe himself, but with his face flush against the mirror.

Katagami Tengen, Naturalist critic, on Tayama Katai’s *Futon*. (Trans. Fowler 112 n.)

The above quote reiterates a common criticism of *shishôsetsu* since its theoretical inauguration in the Taishô era, namely that it is a genre that has little socio-cultural significance and holds little philosophical or political interest for its intensive focus on the individual. In the discussion that follows, I look at Uno’s I-writing with her use of the mirror in order to explore how, or indeed whether, Uno’s writing is in keeping with Katagami’s observation above, specifically that the *shishôsetsu* author “attempts to observe [her]self, but with [her] face flush against the mirror.” Does Uno’s self-observation occur at a point where she becomes incapable of universalizing her predicament? Or, alternately, does self-observation occur to a point where her narrated experience cannot become universalized? Keeping in mind that mirrors are closely associated with a sort of social

self-consciousness, I examine Uno's mirror writing with a dual focus on the creation of identity and (the illusion of) self-integration, and how both occur in the public eye in Uno's *writing of the body*.

As mentioned earlier, *Sasu* (*To Sting*, serialized 1963-1966) contains the autobiographical story of Uno's failed marriage, as well as this passage of Uno mirror-writing after Kitahara leaves her:

I felt that then that my heart was riddled with bullets. Yet I pretended that I had not received a single scratch.... In the eyes of others who knew nothing of his affairs, I must have appeared a fulfilled and fortunate woman. It is strange, but I saw myself as they saw me. There are no scars. It is best to think that there are no scars....I stood before the mirror in a ladies' clothing store downtown, staring at myself in an evening gown of gorgeous imported fabric. Was it witches' work? A momentary illusion? Compared to my husband's lover, a woman I had never seen, I looked like a pathetic woman in some sort of disguise.”(*Sasu*, 35; trans. Copeland *Sound*, 68-9)⁹⁹

Through much visual metaphor, it is apparent the protagonist believes “it was best to think there were no scars” immediately after her marriage ends. Despite the attempt to see and to show oneself as unscarred, however, there is self-reflexivity apparent in Uno's multiply mirrored gaze. Self-reflexivity is at play in a number of spheres: in the wider field of the

⁹⁹ Seldon's translation reads: “When I saw myself in a mirror in a downtown women's clothing store, wrapped in a gorgeous evening dress made of imported material, what devil's prank it was I don't know, but the image, I still remember, was of a pitiable woman in costume, almost like a moment's illusion in contrast with my husband's lover whom I had never seen” (129).

gaze of the husband —by his gaze directed at Uno and with Uno’s knowledge of how his gaze may play over his new lover; through the gaze of the public at a supposedly “unscarred,” fortunate woman; and in the gaze of Uno at herself in the mirror.

Significantly, the gown of gorgeous imported fabric leaves the protagonist feeling naked. That is, by the action of the evil “witch” that is the speaker’s own ego and knowledge, she becomes a pathetic woman without disguise in society, in front of whom she begs to appear unscarred. The mirror reflects the woman’s gaze at her naked self in the aftermath of subterfuge, party to both the undeniability of her husband’s infidelity, and cognisant of her own public and private pretense at happiness.

Reading the nakedness of Uno’s protagonist in the mirror, who recounts the story of her marriage right after Uno’s actual marriage ends, Copeland would conclude: “In Uno’s selective process [of writing], therefore, we can detect a need to recreate a simplified, purified version of her life. There is an effort to bring cohesion to her fragmented life, almost as if the author were sifting through her past in search of an answer or a legitimacy for her unconventional life”(Copeland, *Sound* 75). Uno has also around this time described elsewhere the process of writing her own past from a perspective where she “could see the world clearly...as if I were looking at the life of a stranger”(Onna no inochi [*Life of a woman*], UCZ 10:47-8, trans. Copeland, *Sound* 67-68). The re-creation of a life autobiographically often carries a sense of narrative cohesion, and, perhaps, even temporarily, a more cohesive sense of an “actual” self unexperienced in actual former life or writings. A writer may even gain a sense of perspective, regardless of whether or not the author/protagonist has actually finished assimilating the experience. However, using words such as “simplified,” “purified,” and the phrase “in search of legitimacy for her unconventional life,” the critic above suggests that Uno *herself* has purged, justified in terms of the patriarchal establishment, deciphered and made sense of her actual life, *tout court*. This position indicates a reading of the author/protagonist not only as a figure teleologically progressing among and even within fictional personal narratives. It also

—and more perilously— implies that “verification”¹⁰⁰ from the author, who says that she can “now see the world clearly,” means not only that the actual “Uno” has assimilated the past, but also that a reading of Uno’s textual “I’s” and the growth of the “I” can or should be proven by the legible facts of Uno’s life which she apparently has to legitimate. However, as one reads back through the refractions in the mirror passage above, vision and understanding are constantly at odds with each other, even while they comprise whatever Uno/the protagonist artfully and/or actually “is.”

As established in previous chapters, considering that the subject is created in discourse, where notions of the stable referent, transcendent meaning, and objective mimesis are being challenged, the idea of “Uno” as a unified individual *and* an authority in her text assumed by the critic above is brought into question. By maintaining the narrated and actual body of *shishôsetsu* as an absolute and authoritative “I,” the critic here conversely proposes not only a naïve realist/mimeticist reading of “Uno” as an authoritative subject through her *shishôsetsu*, but also a kind of closure on both the author identity and the spectating character “Uno.” Both are unsafe assumptions, particularly as Copeland at the same time recognizes the process of writing and the possible disparity between recreated versions of “Uno’s” life by stating that “[w]riters of personal fiction frequently wrote of the same experience over and over, altering the particulars somewhat in an effort to grapple with the shifting ambiguity of memory” (Copeland, *Sound*, 38). What is at issue here, though, is not only the shifting ambiguity of memory and an author’s inability to get the facts or history “right,” but also the literary creation of identity and the compulsion to impose an integrated reading of fragmented identity on the actual author.

¹⁰⁰ Copeland’s biography of Uno also includes the information that she has met Uno on a number of occasions, thus suggesting access to peripheral personal and historical information that might also facilitate this reading of Uno’s personal development in her writing.

As opposed to a description of Uno's writing of the past as a "search for legitimacy"(Copeland, *Sound* 75), Uno's statement below helps to underline the (re-) creative process we could otherwise find inherent in (re-) writing one's identity and the past.

"Is it really natural to forget the past?...Perhaps then what I remember now is not the truth. Perhaps I remember only what is pleasant. No, I remember by reshaping the past into something pleasant."(Uno, *Ame no oto* [*Sound of the rain*, 1974]: 146; trans. Copeland, *Sound* 75)

Significantly, the author states here that she would like to remember only that which is pleasant *for*, rather than *of*, the past by "reshaping the past into something pleasant." And clearly, Uno's written self is of words. Whether or not we take Uno at her word, the issues she raises here regarding the accuracy of truth, representation, and remembrance serve to remind readers that her autobiographical fiction and writing may not be a simple personal search for an end in happiness, but rather, simply, "ends." Through this type of approach, I therefore examine Uno's *shishôsetsu* as an exploration of her life publicly and fictively at different points and perspectives, and how these points of convergence offer any number of truths as do the visions in her mirror passages. Like other examples of autobiographical/fictive retrospective narrative, I suggest that the protagonist's positions in her relationships are inevitably and provocatively retraced—in writing and even in memory—which is a self-conscious literary act that may change the "facts." Readers thus might productively engage with the fictional accounts of Uno's relationships not as single, strictly "actual" episodes, nor as a story of *the author's* teleologic transformation and enlightenment, but rather as narrative refrains that do not remain the same though treat the author's experience. This notion of repetition resembles, in important ways, the notion of performance and repetition of identity as outlined by Butler in her feminist theory of sexual

and gender identity, where reiteration on the part of the individual helps establish identity which is not completely and wholly fixed. What is consistent, therefore, throughout Uno's *oeuvre* is not necessarily Uno's progress to the singular point of objective self-evaluation, as I will show. Rather, if anything is consistent, it is Uno's engagement of retrospective quoting and re-quoting of her own life.

The notion of "happiness" is related integrally to this construction of identity in Uno's *shishôsetsu*. The opening passage of *Kôfuku* (*Happiness*, 1971) features Kazue, Uno's third-person fictive persona, looking into the mirror and again "reading" and inscribing herself.

Every time Kazue gets out of the bath, she stands in front of the mirror and examines her naked body for a moment. She uses the towel in front of her for modesty and turns her hips slightly, standing at an angle. Her skin has turned slightly pink.

"I look like her," she thinks.

She thus notes her resemblance to Botticelli's Venus. There is the similarity in the way that she is standing although no sea shell supports her. She also has the same feet and slightly rounded stomach. This description might imply that Kazue enjoys staring at herself at length, but in fact this is not the case. She just notes the resemblance and soon gets dressed. (*Kôfuku* 255, trans. Birnbaum 134)

Like Copeland's assessment of the Uno character in *Sasu* (*To sting*), Phyllis Birnbaum remarks here that "Uno's heroine in *Happiness* can speak with satisfaction of her independence from the world of men after decades of futile questing"(133). The protagonist's "futile questing" likely refers to the "hectic romantic entanglements" Birnbaum finds in the life of the actual Uno and in Uno's earlier narratives that explore a "desperate search for gentleness in a life which refuses to yield meaning"(133). Though in

differing ways the above resounds also of the passage of Uno as a young writer evolving from one who imitated other authors to a woman tentatively defining her own identity, *Happiness* is read reflexively by this critic, however, again as a turning point in Uno's *personal* life —just as Copeland below refers biographically to a turning point in the author's life as reflected in her career of I-writing.

Treating Uno's *oeuvre* as a *grand récit*, in a sense, echoing the themes of personal growth and individuation of Uno's separate stories, Copeland further identifies that Uno's growing independence marks a shift to more objective or "dispassionate" (*Sound* 75) narration. She adds that once Uno "had reached an age where she could no longer indulge in love with the same fierce passion she had shown earlier, she began to change her view of both life and art" (*Sound* 67). This critic's observation regarding the perspective of the aging author, as well as the fictional narrator, is strengthened through her reference to Uno's own remarks on her writing:

Strangely my attitude changed after I turned sixty, as if I had been freed from some demonic curse. I could see the world clearly. I felt I had put on an entirely new pair of glasses. Why was this? To put it succinctly it was because I could no longer involve myself in romantic love affairs, no matter how I clamored and fumed. As soon as I realized this, the world, which earlier I could barely see through the swirling fogs of romance, became perfectly clear, as if the fog had melted away to blue sky.

This phenomenon is sad but also rather interesting. Now I see all that I have done up to this point as clearly and indifferently as if I were beholding the life of a stranger. When I was there in the whirlpool I could not think at all, but now I have developed a sort of spectator's stance. (Uno, *Onna no inochi* [*Woman's life*, 1959], UCZ 10:47-48; quoted in Copeland, *Sound* 67-68)

Copeland takes Uno literally at her word, describing a shift for the author herself to one of “objective” spectator. From this vantage point, she reads Uno’s later work as a “passage to a spectator’s stance”(Sound 68), saying “[n]owhere is Uno’s appreciation of self more wonderfully rendered than in her *watakushi shôsetsu*, *Kôfuku*.”(Copeland, Sound 75-76). Thus Copeland also refers to the Venus passage of *Happiness* above as a positive example of Uno’s progression to an objectively narrated “integrated sense of self”(Sound 76).¹⁰¹ The equation that evolves in readings of Uno’s *oeuvre*, namely that equating “happiness” with objectivity, self-integration and identity, is clear. Reconsidering this “spectator’s stance,” however, it may also be argued that the apparent integration of self is incomplete, contradictory, and more complex than a reading of an objective representation by a mature author suggests, particularly when read in the historical context of *shishôsetsu* that have strived continually for objective representation.

One may read this mirror-writing passage of *Happiness* as similar to any retrospective autobiographical narration: objectivity is almost always implied by the narrating author who remembers experiences and then writes of them. Moreover, the whole discourse of objectivity here implies ideas of truth that we have already demonstrated are problematic regarding realist readings of the lives behind *shishôsetsu*. Further, self-integration and narrative objectivity must be questioned when the narrative itself points out in no uncertain terms the transitions of self and the falsehood of perception through the mirror. In this respect, as the retrospective scope of *Happiness* is found to include fragmentary accounts of Uno’s multiple marriages and relationships, we discover an accumulated sense of a unique, individual “I” over the course of her relationships and

¹⁰¹ Copeland goes on to describe that this was likely a discovery from the teachings of the Tenpu society, where “one of the methods for inducing a healthy self-image is to have patients look at themselves in a mirror every morning, while thinking only positive thoughts”(Copeland 77).

experiences. This accumulative narration of individual identity, notably, is coupled simultaneously with a deconstructive narration of the self that reflects the speaker's knowledge that she is observed, that she represents different things to others who view her as well as to herself, and that she writes her "I" as a unique individual against society. That is, Kazue sees herself through a series of reflections concerned with how others see her, namely Kazue's former husbands, her in-laws, the boy from the village who "defrosts her pipes" in Hokkaido, other "outsiders" and the reading public. In addition, she "learns" herself through descriptions of how she sees herself in the mirror as an individual and as a specific love object, Venus, even while in this supposedly objective description one suspects that she later may be more objective, more "happy" or sure of herself in another way. Kazue seeing and knowing herself in the mirror and in the narrative thus is a mesmerizing scopic and literary reflection of the author herself engaging in the act of *shishôsetsu* writing.

By establishing this narrative as a turning point in Uno's writing, we falsely take Uno at her word, for "Uno" is all about words and movement. In the same story *Happiness*, the protagonist Kazue states: "Kazue always tries not to think of herself as an unhappy woman, and even though most people think she is unhappy, Kazue does not think so herself. Why is that?...It frightens her, the pain of thinking of herself unhappy, and so she determines to consider herself happy, which has become her daily habit" (*Kôfuku* 260-61, trans. Birnbaum 138).¹⁰² The deliberate self-deception of the speaker, as well as her self-affirmation under public scrutiny, is similar to the previously quoted speaker's desire to "remember by reshaping the past into something pleasant" (Uno, *Ame no oto*, 146; trans. Copeland, *Sound* 75) and in Uno's protagonist's attempt to see herself as unscarred. All such presentations of the speaker thinking of herself and life as happy are narrated through

¹⁰² *Happiness* contains the remarkable third-person narrator of the Japanese *shishôsetsu* discussed in chapter two.

the complex interface of the private, self-conscious subject narrated in, and against, the public gaze through which she interpolates her self. This subtle paradox of “truth” and individual *perception* is lost should one choose to approach this story as a uni-dimensional trajectory of an author arriving at “happiness” and “self-integration”(Copeland, *Sound* 75), as an illustration of the author’s “positive acceptance of self and life”(ibid. 77), or as proof of her “healthy self-esteem denoting inner strength, not unlike that which Kazue feels when she gazes in her bathroom mirror”(ibid.). Apparently identifying completed self-integration, Copeland finds that “the seventy-year-old Uno can celebrate herself as a fully accomplished individual...[a woman] ‘reborn’ from the waters of the past as a new woman, a whole woman”(ibid.), amounting to a somewhat sanctimonious reading of the author herself which ignores the affected image of the mature Kazue’s near-miraculous “rebirth” as Botticelli’s nubile Venus arising from a shell. Conversely for Uno as author, as stated, there seems no single rebirth when the story of her self is not yet over: In addition to the period of her first story in 1924 to this story in 1971, “happiness” would remain a continuing theme of Uno’s for the next twenty-five years.

Uno’s mirror-writings, that is, her *shishôsetsu*, in addition to demonstrating the iterative nature of the speaking subject and identity of *writing of the body*, are self-conscious microcosms that incorporate in various ways notions of society and others. As mentioned in the introduction to this section, Uno’s writing can be read as the universalization of individual experience rather than as simple self-absorption because her writing traces the experience of a unique individual who is yet part of society in their reading of her, in her presentation of an individual life, and in her desire to *appear* happy. Citing the passage of the Uno character in front of her mirror in *Sasu*, Copeland states: “Midway through the work the woman confronts the facade she has struggled to create....[Though] almost in protest against her pain, Uno creates in the pages of *To Sting* a wife who submissively accepts her husband’s infidelities, or rather, who effectively denies that they wound her. She convinces herself in her silence that she is happy”(Sound69) —a

stance not unlike that Kazue takes in the later narrative *Happiness*. Despite the illusion of happiness the character creates for herself in her mirror *as a self visible to the public*, the critic above nonetheless concludes that this passage illustrates Uno's arrival at a self-defined, rather than other-defined, sense of self that is, if achieved, apparently free of protracted internal contradiction brought on by her understanding of how others see her.

Regarding another aspect of the social nature of the private confession or *writing of the body*, it becomes impossible to discuss Uno's *shishôsetsu* without acknowledging the presence of the public, the gaze, and other men in her self-conscious definition of self. Not only has the protagonist failed to disengage herself even now from the public's gaze, but also, contrary to some readings which find an absence of narrative self-evaluation in Uno's works until the narrative *Sasu*, such introspection may be shown to be present at different stages throughout Uno's writing career, from *Mohô no Tensai* (*Genius of imitation*, 1934), to *Watashi no seishun monogatari* (*Tales of my youth*, 1947), to *Jidenteki ren'ai ron* (*Record of my loves*, 1959),¹⁰³ to the self-conscious narration of *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi* (*Story of a certain woman*, 1971). One may want to trace the development of Uno the author through her fictive accounts of relationships with men toward a self-defined sense of self. However, more compelling for the present study is an understanding of the way Uno's *shishôsetsu* body is discursively constructed like an figure in a hall of mirrors clashing and joining with others, with men, in her narrated life. Uno's insatiable discursive self is written, re-written, re-evaluated, read, and then re-written again in such a way that it seems both impossible, insufficient, and even unimportant, to discern whether the "Uno" self has achieved actual individuation, full independence, happiness, and/or self-integration, though all may be presented as desirable.

¹⁰³ Here Uno writes: "When I think back on it, my life was never so full of promise as it was that year and eight months with my husband in Hokkaido. That was the only time I ever lived the well-ordered life of an ordinary woman" (*UCZ*, 12:79; trans. Copeland 22).

Not only are her narratives of self itinerant and without end, the Venus mirror of *Happiness* can be read as a symbolic crystallization of the act of autobiographical writing itself as an act of presentation and viewing, namely as the representation of Uno's consciousness of her own presented self and its reception. In this compelling performance of the gazer and the gaze in Uno's mirror-writing, the narrative implies the meta-gaze of the autobiographer Uno at her own *shishôsetsu* self. This autobiographical gaze, significantly, incorporates in addition the interpolating public gaze, as well as our gaze as readers and members of society, in its own self-consciousness. More specifically, the social (sometimes masculine) gaze of spectators and forms of authority observing and repressing the written body of Uno/Kazue is implied.¹⁰⁴ This discursive area in which the viewers and society are recognized in the narrative of *shishôsetsu* also provides a site, therefore, to take up the issue of gender and women's personal writing in a deconstructive polemic against the romanticization of the masculine, integrated subject and an affirmation of the absolute "I." More specifically, some critics would find the fragmented "I" and the presentation of the subject in relation to others as indigenous to women's writing. I argue that like other *shishôsetsu*, Uno's literary representations of her "self" gazing at her self present the subject in refracted relation to others and demonstrate a self-consciousness in personal writing that relates to and incorporates society. Moreover, Uno's *shishôsetsu*

¹⁰⁴ Some critics, such as Teresa de Lauretis in *Alice Doesn't* (1984) and in *Technologies of Gender* (1987), analyze the gaze in feminist terms. For de Lauretis, identification of the gaze is masculine/active (camera's gaze) and feminine/passive (landscape, body): there is also a further identification that is figural narrative, which helps the woman spectator negotiate between gaze and image. I use the adjective 'masculine' here not to reiterate feminist film critic's use of the term to describe all scopophilic desire and the gaze, but rather in the sense that Uno masculinizes it in her presented sense of self as reflected through her relations with men.

present a self as like a photographic “mirror with a memory,”¹⁰⁵ where identity can be traced and only temporarily fixed. As such, fleeting or prolonged, the gaze in the mirror forms a point of intersection where one cannot assume complete and historically sustained integration for the presented nor the viewed subject.

This self-reflexivity of both *shishôsetsu* and narrations of mirror-writing is finally cemented in Kazue’s presentation of photographs. When her husband is conscripted and leaves Kazue for a year, Kazue visits a dollmaker and sends her husband photos of the dolls, according to her report in *Happiness*. The author writes: “Could it be that Kazue relied only on what she saw with her eyes and derived pleasure only from acting solely on the basis of this evidence?” (*Kôfuku* 264, trans. Birnbaum 140). The stridently “objective” fixing of images is really subjective and self-conscious: Kazue also rearranges the furniture and sends her husband pictures of the room, as well as pictures of her picking peas in the pea field (*ibid.* 141), only to be told that the stories about the dolls are irritating and that the letters about the rearrangements met only with the husband’s total dismay. The business Kazue makes of taking and sending photos is a reflection of a need to satisfactorily fix and communicate the relation of objects to her self, to define herself to herself as well as for her husband’s benefit. Kazue’s reliance on the evidence of the visual object—be it pictures of dolls, furniture, peas, or herself as Venus—to “objectively” determine something about her, or her life, or herself in relation to her husband, or, moreover, in relation to others, foregrounds notions of perception, proof, representation, and existence, all of which are issues addressed in this discussion of Uno’s work, in her “objective” presentation of her self, and in other *shishôsetsu*. Foregrounding individual perception, Kazue’s pictures of objects function like the *shishôsetsu* act and text itself in the sense that whatever is objectively presented or represented becomes “knowledge” of the self. The veracity, significance, and pleasure of the object is actualized by Kazue because it is

¹⁰⁵ From Rosalind Coward’s study of the gaze and reiteration of Daguerre’s phrase.

positioned. This metaphor of interpreting signs and the self therefore can be used to guide readings of Uno's *shishôsetsu*, particularly in her mirror-writing, as the performance of identity realized through "objective" statements of the self.

With the operation of mirror-writing read in this manner, rather than speculate on Uno's success or failure at coming to a singular, cohesive sense of identity as reflected in her writings, or as experienced by the real person, I would focus on the method and meanderings of Uno's articulation of self and how the individual of her *shishôsetsu* is read. The Botticelli passage as it continues below raises significant questions regarding knowledge and truth:

In fact, Kazue does not very deeply believe that her naked body resembles Venus. A body with more than seventy years of wear behind it is hardly likely to come close to Venus's. Perhaps Kazue's skin bears blemishes in places and occasionally sags. But her eyesight is failing and the steam from the bath makes the objects before her even more obscure. Kazue includes these shortcomings when she enumerates the happy aspects of her life. In this manner, Kazue collects fragments of happiness one after another, and so lives, spreading them throughout her environment. Even what seems odd to other people, she considers happiness. (*Kôfuku* 255-566, trans. Birnbaum 134)

Here is the speaker's affirmation that now, in fact, she does not think she looks like Venus. With the author's/Kazue's realistic acknowledgement of her physical blemishes—metaphors of unhappy moments in her life—the image of Kazue-as-Venus is marred. Specifically, the identity of the speaker becomes paradoxically "truer" to unpleasant "reality," but then is miraculously restored to beautiful once again as the little scars and inconsistencies vanish from view in her deliberate (mis)perception. What is odd or nasty is obscured; truth is ignored in a blurring of the image in the "objective" mirror now fogged.

Representation here conducts a fascinating transformation of the figure into an object of happiness that the speaker can, quite simply, like. The gaze of the writer on herself as presented in *shishôsetsu* acts similarly. Problematizing all simple, unself-conscious, and objective representations of an “I,” Kazue’s deception encourages the reader of Uno’s *shishôsetsu* to consider the veracity of individual perception and interpretation and, therefore, also raises the issue of audience interaction with a literary text. The spectator/reader/writer sees whatever he/she wants to see. Kazue *sees* Venus, just as we read Uno.

Though not fully expanded by the “superego” of Kazue remarking on “a body with more than seventy years behind it” latching on to “what seems odd to other people,” our ways of thinking about the world, or representing it to ourselves, are not only implied but also become naturalized when we take our conception of that world for granted, and potentially denaturalized when we examine ourselves or others looking at ourselves, as Uno’s *shishôsetsu* brings readers to do. An insight enabled by this understanding is the social construct of femininity, both through and against which Uno has struggled to narrate her self as an early feminist, *modern girl*, and mature woman, that is another potential field of perception and deception Uno interrogates in her writing. Uno’s provocative representation of a female individual in *Happiness*, *ingénue* no longer but rather an artfully innocent seventy-year-old, “seeing” herself and deliberately ignoring her blemishes in her mirror-writing, cannot be read on an individual level without the social reality the reader, whom Uno anticipates, brings to the text and that generates certain expectations of “Woman” and Japanese women.

In this respect, as “any number of fragmented bits of happiness from her existence”(270), it is notable that Kazue constructs this identity while wondering “whether all the men she had lived with were on the sidelines observing her and, standing at the spot from where they had sent her on her way alone, had heaved a sigh of relief”(271). In Uno’s preponderance of treatments of a fragmented “I” seen in relation to men in her life —her

father, her husbands, her liaisons—, the possibility of finding fissures in patriarchal culture for the female construction of self outside of relations to men and a masculinized gaze remains an unanswered question in Uno's work, though other critics suggest this is accomplished in *Happiness*. Regardless, at her most intimate, most natural state of physical and psychological undress in the bath, Uno/Kazue/Venus viewing herself in Uno's *shishôsetsu* is made public for *any* reader, not only for the narrativized "masculine" gaze of Uno's former lovers and husbands "on the sidelines," though the subject is realized as a product of patriarchal culture characterized by such effects as "good wife, wise mother." Moreover, as the protagonist Kazue/Uno turns inward with the psychical construction of herself as happy, and simultaneously outward in an unarticulated interrogation of the relation between female art object and reader/audience, the performance of Uno's identity is underlined through both the voyeuristic nature of reading I-fiction and the play of mirrors Uno sets up that together enable the construction of the "I" in *shishôsetsu*. Like I-writing, the mirror, furthermore, acts an exploration of boundaries and of the interface between self and the world while it is also a surface for the process of inscription and subject generation.

The image of Venus/Uno/Kazue begs a reading of how this woman character "Uno" is constituted and constitutes herself through social practices and within cultural contexts. In addition, they also point to the importance of understanding ways this production of "Woman" in writing has become a commodity, something bought and sold by the literary institution, though an object with purchase value itself. Venus/Uno/Kazue is not only in various ways a construction and commodity of gender fantasy on the part of the public and Uno's readership, but also is a product commodified by the author herself. As I demonstrated, it is this particular construction of self and desire transformed into commodity that will afford critics the opportunity to accuse a writer like Uno of "pandering to issues of gender," "titillating consumers," and writing as a "woman writer" for "personal advancement" as Miyamoto has described Uno's literary efforts.

Nonetheless, acknowledging this commodification of Woman and the gendered subject of *shishôsetsu*, as well as the rhetorical discovery of an actual individual, however, also presents the potential for authors to write against former narrations or readings of their own self that the interested public has come to know. It is precisely in this knowledge of the public's commodification of a subject that the Uno self serves to remind us of the monopoly the Taishô era subject of male *shishôsetsu* has had on the literary and cultural institution and literary individualism.

If a wide range of writers have found expression in the *shishôsetsu* “not because they were equally motivated to tell the truth but because they found in it a readily available medium for marketing their candor”(Fowler 296-98), not only does Uno market her candor, but she markets and seems to sell even *herself* on an image of a “certain” woman (as in *Aru hitori no onna no hanashi*), of her “happy” self. Truth is perception, so Uno underlines. This vast marketability of “Uno” the candid character is evident in the popularity of her early *new woman* persona in Taishô and Shôwa Japan and extends also to her mass appeal in contemporary Japanese society with appearances on TV, at public events,¹⁰⁶ and in popular magazines. Similarly, her death was also occasion, among other media events, for an entire edition of the popular literary magazine *Taiyô* (*Sun*, Jan. 1997) to be devoted to her written work, her favorite foods, discussions of her many treatises on life and love, her secrets to a healthy old age, and a range of photographs of her spanning four eras. Apparent in Uno's visions of herself in the mirror, by her use of photographs, through her *writing of the body*, and in the media surrounding her is the

¹⁰⁶ Not only did Uno form *Style* magazine and a company *Sutairu-sha* around it, she also published a magazine *Buntai*, and opened a kimono store on the Ginza. A museum exhibition of the kimono collection of Uno Chiyo also took place in 1995 (Yokohama, Japan). Much of the marketability of “Uno” merchandise, including her *shishôsetsu*, was intimately dependent on the “scandalous” popularity of the “Uno” figure.

notion that the identity of “Uno” does not reside simply in the fixed, represented image of her in an autobiographical presentation. Personal identity, and by implication the possibility of isolating the genre *shishôsetsu*, circulates between the author’s representation, the individual spectator, and the collective spectator as well as the consumer, society. Just as “Kazue collects fragments of happiness one after another, and so lives”(134), Uno’s narrated “I” or individual body is presented and read as an itinerant, highly self-conscious, fragmentary, and shifting subject of desire in her *shishôsetsu*.

Chapter Four: Tsushima Yûko

Chased By the Light of the Night

Memories are, of course, tricky, even though they are all we have to feel that we truly exist.

David Albahari, *Words are Something Else*

Tsushima Yûko's novel of 1986 *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*, that may be translated as *Chased by the evening light*, or, *Driven by the light of the night*,¹⁰⁷ might just have easily been called "Chasing *after* the light of the night." That is, the affective/passive tense of the verb *owarete* Tsushima chooses for the novel's title indicates "to be pursued." However, as Tsushima's personal narrative unfolds, it becomes clearer how *owarete* might be thought of in the *active* voice, indicating "to seek for," or "to go after" because Tsushima deliberately excavates the past. Specifically, Tsushima restores her personal history, as well as a historical and literary past, in order to re-live and to write her personal experience.¹⁰⁸ Her novel thus is evidence of this *shishôsetsu* author's descent into a metaphoric night, her past and her pain, and into other texts of the past in order to exorcize her sorrow.

¹⁰⁷ The French translation by Rose-Marie Fayolle is titled *Poursuivie par la lumière de la nuit* (1990).

¹⁰⁸ The verb *ou*, meaning to pursue or chase, is also read *tsui*, forming part of the following compounds: *kyutsui*, hot pursuit; *tsuibo*, cherish the memory of; *tsuioku*, recollection, reminiscences; and *tsuina*, exorcism.

More concretely, then, *Chased by the light of the night* is the story of the narrator's/Tsushima's grief and survival of her son's tragic death by drowning at age nine: it is also the restoration of a text approximately a thousand years old.¹⁰⁹ That is, within the present text recounting her life's experience, Tsushima embeds an incomplete narrative, *Yowa no nezame* (*Nezame at night*, likely written after 1059 in the third quarter of the eleventh century by the same author of *The Sarashina Diary*), that is, moreover, a fragmented ancient narrative that Tsushima fleshes out. Tsushima deliberately narrates her own dire experience in relation to the Heian-era author and to past narrative, thus effectively chasing *after* the light of the night by her recollection and association in this narrative of memory. Containing both an intertext and a frame text, this narratologically dual summoning of the past, in addition, is structurally woven together throughout by metaphors of light and the circular patterns of life, relationships, sorrow, and death.

Significantly, the narrative of *Chased by the light of the night* is a dialogue not only between the texts that comprise it, but also contains a dialogue via letters from the present narrator to the Heian author. The author/protagonist copes with her grief through an intimate conversation with the other ancient author, as becomes apparent, and this is itself an operation that will guide our understanding of the nature of communicative and discursive acts of writing, reading, and personal identity presented in this narrative of self. A study of both the intertext and the frame of this *shishôsetsu* will lead naturally into a discussion of dialogism and the discursive subject present in Tsushima's *oeuvre*. The discursive nature of identity Tsushima presents is one characterized by a shifting sense of self, of a subject produced by historical events and all that is experienced, said, shared and

¹⁰⁹ Though the title of the work has been translated *The Tale of Nezame* (Hochstedler), and the word *nezame* has been taken for the female protagonist's name, *yowa no nezame* actually translates to "evening remorse," or "wakefulness at night," and has the further implication of wakefulness caused by love or suffering.

read by and about an individual. To begin, I will illustrate how the individual “Tsushima” comes to be positioned and known in an expressive and experiential context, namely by examining how identity is performed between narratives and over the course of the main narrative.

The present study will then evolve toward a consideration of the actual body in *shishôsetsu*, thereby integrating the *discursive* with the *corporeal* body. The most promising approach toward the authorial “I” in any analysis of *writing of the body*, as outlined in chapters two and three, is a method of understanding the *shishôsetsu* “I” as both created in language and the world, and as a material, historical authorial body. Approaching the *body* of Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* as discursive and corporeal represents a particularly important break with traditional genre definitions that have generally realized two ends. These are, namely, either to inscribe the male body in all I-writing in a “realist,” positivist enterprise, and/or to erase the individual subject of contemporary Japanese (female) experience, or “other” experience, for example, by focusing only on a particular subject and methods of knowing this subject demonstrated in Taishô era writing. Tsushima’s personal writing explicitly challenges mimetic representation, positivist forms of knowledge, and forms of knowledge of the Self because it highlights “other” experience. As such, her writing unequivocally calls for a phenomenological or experiential approach to understanding the body and its place in the world, as well as the experiential body’s orientations toward possible worlds, whether narrative or psychological or social and historical. As will be demonstrated, the body understood as both discursive and material clearly will be the most productive way in which to analyze identity and the subject, as well as the function of *shishôsetsu*, and to discuss the relation of difference operative in the genre.

For the present study, *Chased by the light of the night* will provide the bulk of the literary material for the preliminary discussion in this chapter

dedicated to the discursive elements of Tsushima's *shishôsetsu* self. The study of the corporeal body of *shishôsetsu* in the latter half of this chapter will be supplemented with examples from other texts of Tsushima's *oeuvre* that is, as a whole, more or less read biographically. Both the discursive and corporeal elements of identity, then, will be brought together in this study of Tsushima's *oeuvre* to show how Tsushima represents the voices and determinations that hold and structure the individual against or outside the community, the collective, and even "the norm." The author's interest in how the individual is structured as difference is manifest in a number of her works that not only endeavor to understand individual experience, but also investigate ways in which we come to know the world and ourselves. Unencumbered, then, by realist modes of representation, Tsushima strives to present how the experiential body is not only an object among many, but is also our means of knowing, belonging, and understanding.

The Frame

The narrator of *Chased by the evening light* in its first, middle, and last entries —"Letter," "Second Letter on the Way," and "Final Letter"— rhetorically addresses the heroine/author of *Yowa no nezame*.

Beginning today, I've decided to start writing a letter to you....

From a strictly physical point of view, life and death undoubtedly have not changed much in the space of a thousand years. Even if, like other things concerned with life, the clothing that we wear and the places in which we live have changed. The worrying diseases we suffer and our amusements have also changed. But if we ever had cause for any uncertainty, the only thing that we cannot ignore, even if we wanted to, is death...that is always there and hasn't changed whatsoever, no matter what the era, no matter what the country. You lived a death identical to the one that I know. Your death is not completely alien to me.

In this way, after living your death, which came to superimpose itself on the one at hand, it seemed as if I could feel your immediate presence. I couldn't resist the desire to write/speak to you. (7-9)¹¹⁰

The above frame text describing the narrator's sense of the ineluctability of death, the shared experience of death, and a parent's sorrow, is the text of a "letter" directly addressed to *Sugawara no Takasue no musume* (*The daughter of Takasue of Sugawara*, b.1008), the author of the Heian text *Yowa no nezame*. By her own equation, the speaker forms an explicit correlation between her experience and the sorrow communicated in *Yowa no nezame*. In a quiet and galvanizing fashion, Tsushima's contemporary narrator and protagonist, who is apparently herself, then builds onto the letter framework by describing her helpless reaction to the sudden death of her son.

In the case of my son...he was a child who liked to play with floating rings in the warm bath water...

¹¹⁰ See Appendix One.

That night, when I went to check on him [in his bath], I found him floating face upward in the warm water. He seemed so nice and peaceful floating there with a smile.

For a quick moment, I thought he was trying to scare me by playing a naughty trick. That's why, when I took him right away into my arms, I didn't think anything serious had happened. But after taking him up in my arms and even shaking him, I began to get the feeling that he wasn't reacting to anything, and I came to understand that something terrible seemed to have happened.

I called an ambulance right away, and, while waiting for their arrival, tried to put air in his mouth and pushed on his chest again and again. (26-27)¹¹¹

When her son's death is confirmed, the narrator of *Chased by the light of the night* continues her own exposure. She describes the hospital, her physical revulsion in response to her new knowledge, an ensuing police interrogation, a police squad's inspection of her home, their investigation into the circumstances of the boy's death, her humiliation, and her only desire to be left alone with the body of her dead son. The speaker's sparse, carefully detached prose indicates how she is almost overwhelmed by her grief, yet endeavors to narrate it.

The above frame text provides the scaffolding for a journey of personal introspection and a struggle for understanding. By telling the above story through letters to the Heian author, the protagonist builds a downward and inward exploration of her own experience and emotions and the more general human psychology of sorrow. Amid descriptions of her confusion, her deep, unforgivable regret, and the discomfiting appearance of the visage of her own brother who died at 15, Tsushima relates how she is tormented by visions of her dead son in the long nights that follow the accident.

¹¹¹ See Appendix Two.

Eventually, the narrator describes her desire to understand death by plumbing other stories of solitude, death, and sorrow. And it is in this retrospective yet accretionary way that *Yowa no nezame* is built into the protagonist's present discourse.

The Heian narrator, for her silent part in this exchange that the speaker creates for herself, apparently "communicates" to the speaker her own experience of death, her sorrow, and her religious salvation from this life. Interpolated by the present narrator, she is addressed as follows:

Without doubt, you knew prayer. People long ago were devoted to religion, and believed in superstitions. People who puff out their chests and say that now, it's different, are not rare... But how is it different? For you, confronted by death, didn't you only pray because you couldn't do otherwise?

I didn't even dream that by this roundabout path I would, in the end, return again to your story.

At one time, I'd intended to throw away my own, hated stories. But I stepped into your story again, and I wanted to be delivered by hearing your prayer [your story]. Even now, I can't pray to Buddha or the gods. At least, over the layers of your prayer, my own personal story is called back to life.

This, now, is my prayer. (46-47)¹¹²

Seeking deliverance from her pain, Tsushima's narrator turned first to her own writing. Finding no solace there, she throws them aside and turns to the story of the long-suffering Heian author in order to help bring her a sense of understanding, human connection, and personal salvation, which she eventually finds in a return to her own writing.

¹¹² See Appendix Three.

This intimate prayer that occurs early in the letter portions of Tsushima's narrative *Yoru no hikari ni owarete* begins a narration also of the recent past over time: a sense of the passage of time occurs through the changing seasons of the narrator's grief that follow. The first letter, that contains the passages discussed above, is an explanation of the accident, the protagonist's grief, and the beginning of her recovery process, both emotional and literal. In "Second Letter on the Way," a letter passage inserted mid-text, Tsushima describes her relationship with the boy's father. She tells the story of a seemingly fruitless journey she takes with her son's father just before Christmas, the disastrous relations she experienced with that "particular man," and the clarity with which the protagonist/author sees the travel, eventually, as a necessary passage of her own. The chapter "Final Letter" opens with the coming of spring, the intensifying of the sun's rays, and the acknowledgment of a year's passage since the death of the narrator's son. "I've written a long letter to you," the narrator says, continuing:

I'm grateful to you who wrote *Yowa no nezame*. To you, who revealed your thoughts and who, through the intermediary of your story, turned my poor heart to your era....

I can feel your warm breath. Because I can truly feel the wind and the sun's light on my skin. Because you lived and felt the same thing on your skin....

A beautiful season is about to return. (415-16)

As the cherry blossoms bloom, the reader is left with a sense of the author's and protagonist's healing, and the narrative closes.

Though each of these conversational letters about isolation and pain, a mother's relationship with her child, a woman's broken marriage, relationships with men, her memories of their shared daily life, and her

grieving process, are all letters addressed to the Heian author, Tsushima also implicitly addresses her own readers of her *shishôsetsu*. As will be studied at greater length in a later section, she acknowledges the act of textual production and reception she has been party to through reading the Heian narrative of grief and the passage of time. The implication is that this process will also occur with her text *Yoru no hikari ni owarete* and its readers, who may also have had common experiences, and will share hers through the narrative. By calling on and re-writing the Heian text, Tsushima thus also provides us with a clue to the act of reading her personal narrative, individual identity, and human experience, which will be pulled together with a discussion of the intertext below.

The Discursive Intertext, the Well

Yowa no nezame of *Sugawara no Takasue no musume* is the story of the life of a woman who “accidentally” falls in love with her sister’s fiancé, Naidaijin, and he with her.¹¹³ She ends up with not only one, but two, illegitimate children by him and is the object of both his affection as well as that of the present Emperor, relationships which together

¹¹³ The lovers’ relationship began without their knowledge of who each other was, as Naidaijin, attracted to a woman by her *koto* music, makes love to her assuming her to be his inferior.

antagonize an extremely complex system of social and familial obligation and taboo.¹¹⁴ The prophesy that Nezame therefore is told at the age of fourteen, that she is “a rare and beautiful person doomed to a life of grief and anxiety” (Hochstedler 5), seems borne out by the sorrow the young Heian woman experiences. Nezame, it seems, cannot escape the fate of having consummated an unsanctioned love, and having been loved, by men in social circumstances which would not only involve prohibitions and actions beyond her control, but would also condemn her and deny her peace. In response to her unsettled position at court and the entanglements of illicit love, she eventually seeks refuge in a life of religious isolation and removal. In all its complex social and private relations between individuals, the life of “this world” thus is brought into tension with “the next world” to which Nezame so desires escape.

It is significant that, though a novel like *The Tale of Genji*, the loving and painful experiences described in *Yowa no nezame* are narrated in a personal tone. The narrator often approximates the confessional tone of a diary in her revelations of personal feelings, thoughts, and explorations of individual psychology, and in the challenges faced by a woman in isolation. Correspondingly, the narrative, which seems to echo the lived circumstances of Takasue’s daughter, often unfolds within the confines of intimate rooms. It is precisely because this is an intimate narration of the personal strife of a woman and an individual that the Tsushima speaker appears particularly drawn to the Heian text.

Tsushima lays this fateful story of the much-troubled life of Nezame within the context of her contemporary evocation of night, light, life, love, sorrow, death, and hope of salvation. Framed on either end with the speaker’s letters narrating present-day events, the three chapter texts re-telling the Heian story include “Dream” and “Rain,” and, following “Second Letter on the Way,” “Breath.” Together these three chapters re-compose the

¹¹⁴ Many of the experiences narrated in *Yowa no nezame* are common to those narrated in *Sarashina nikki* [*Sarashina Diary*] of 1059.

experiences and text of the Heian author, whose own words are also fragmentary, as mentioned, as only segments of the original Heian manuscript have been recovered. In these chapters, *Chased by the light of the night* is thus also, in part, a thoroughly imaginative re-creation of dialogues and experiences from retrieved, as well as lost lines, of the Heian story. Tsushima re-iterates the personal narrative of life, love, and death and the relationship between a mother (Nezame) and her children (Himegimi, daughter; and Masako, son), as well as the relationships between man and woman, and that between sisters, and simultaneously couples these experiences with events in her own life. In doing so, she activates the wealth of personal experience, including that of sorrow and death, inherent in the text of an unconventional yet strong Heian mother, lover, and author. But the result is more a recovery and processing of Tsushima's own actual life innovatively and publicly through literal and literary equation.

Re-activating the tale *Yowa no nezame*, Tsushima notes that her overall project draws upon Nezame's life and narrative for support as if drawing "from a well." The strength she realizes in the ancient text is that of a strong woman faced with what are, at times, insurmountable difficulties. In a separate "letter to the reader," appended as an additional note to the full text of *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*, Tsushima states that "people continue to be born, and people continue to die"(420). Writing this, Tsushima directly acknowledges the ubiquity of certain experiences and how one may gain strength from this knowledge and another's experience of it.

It is within this framework [of living and dying] that I live, and that I continued to write novels. Thinking this, I wanted to exchange stories with a woman living in a past era in a position that resembled mine.

While living in this era, even if it were only for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the meaning of the universality of human life and death, I wanted to begin talking with a woman who lived and died a thousand years ago.

So in this work, I began alone as if from the bottom of a well. (420-421)¹¹⁵

In the above declaration of how she could not write, read, or even feel like living after the death, Tsushima herself tells her readers that she likens the Heian speaker's position to her own, and has found solace in it. While wondering if painful experience in life is not also necessary, therefore, the author yet finds consolation in the knowledge that experience, like death, is inevitable and shared. Whatever the event, one continues to live and to write. Thus writing from her own "well" of experience, Tsushima correlates the production and reception of her solitary voice producing a story to that of the Heian narrator's she has heard and received. In doing so, the author also provides present readers with a diagetic clue to reading *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*.

In the context of the present study of *writing of the body*, it is particularly useful to discuss this well metaphor in terms of its discursive function, namely that of the meanings produced of a dialogue over time and between individuals. Tsushima has titled this address to the reader appended to her text *Kodoku kara kodoku e*, literally "from one loneliness to another," or, "from one solitude to another solitude." Conscious of the well/wealth of written experience, the author is also aware of the paradox of shared isolation, and bridges this historical gap between individuals through the direct address of the letters. Tsushima describes an author's speaking voice as "like a murmur from a well" which she hears: she anticipates her audience will hear hers as well. In this way, Tsushima signals her awareness of the rhetorical exchange between author and audience that implicitly describes her own discursive interaction with *Yowa no nezame* and, further, indicates how present readers may hear the voice from the well of *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix Four.

The writer who writes a novel is a small thing, but the work is like a single murmur from the bottom of a well. I think that if this is so, then this murmur will somehow reach someone's ear, and —though it's only my thinking— for those people whose ears don't pick up the murmur, even if there are some who can't, there are certainly people out there somewhere who can feel it. In any era, there are people who can feel this murmur from the bottom of the well, and this is the strange strength that one can be made to feel through literature.¹¹⁶

Describing the strength of the reverberations of literature over time, where literature literally “speaks” to the reader, this letter to the reader reflects Tsushima's interest in the communicative act of narrating *Chased by the light of the night*. By extension, Tsushima's exploration through the Heian text also brings up the discourse of the past and other narratives.

Integral to reading the “I” in Tsushima's text is first a recognition of this simultaneous operation of the diverse narratives and temporalities in the frame text and intertext I have presented above. Tsushima employs multiplicity in this dual narrative structure in order to build a sense of cumulative personal experience, which also will be evident in the sense of a cumulative subject she develops in her *shishôsetsu* that I will examine later. As for this study of time, experience, and narration, there is first a recollected temporality present in the speaker's recounting of the death of her son and her grief. There is also a retrospective temporality present in the narrative with the equation between the unfolding Heian story and the present narrative of the protagonist's struggle. Finally there is a generative/productive temporality that is at once teleologic and circular, not only present in the contemporary narrative's movement through the passing of the seasons but also one that is conjoined by the re-creation of the Heian tale.

¹¹⁶ See Appendix Five.

Suzuki makes an applicable observation on temporality in *shishôsetsu* narrative using Shiga's *Wakai* (*Reconciliation*, 1917), a widely known autobiographical fiction mentioned in my introduction. She describes an "extra-temporal mode" that emerges during the course of Shiga's narrative, specifically when concerned with the narrator's baby's death and the birth of a second child. These events of his personal fiction are "presented with such a sense of immediacy that they almost seem to stand independent of the larger narrative [to the point where] the reader feels as if he or she is directly witnessing the unfolding events"(119). She adds: "Many readers have felt that both scenes attain a special extra-temporal "presentness" in which both the narrator and the reader relive a past event in the present moment, transcending the usual distinctions between the past and present, action and reflection, cause and result"(119-20). This blurring of temporal distinctions that Suzuki finds generated by the *Wakai* narrative is also present in readings of *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*. Here in Tsushima's text, distinctions between past and present almost collapse in the "present-ness" and intimacy of Tsushima's re-telling of the Heian narrative of suffering. The voices of the Tsushima protagonist, the Heian narrator, Nezame and other individuals blend into the present as they converse and negotiate different circumstances. Specifically, the intimate Nezame narrative, which also directly addresses her readers because it is told in close circumstance to her own listeners and readers, produces a "presentness" which is interwoven, moreover, with a most immediate and candid "letter" narration of Tsushima's own shock and indelible grief over her son's death. Again illustrating the action of reading "from the well,"¹¹⁷ Tsushima draws her strength to continue writing, indeed to continue her own life, from the marginalized and isolated voice of the Heian "well" which sounds immediate even through time. Significant to understanding the creation of the self in Tsushima's text is this

¹¹⁷ See Appendix Six.

understanding that human experience, though individual and isolated and brief, is also immediate and shared.

Tsushima's interest in the sound of the past and how it figures in the present is expounded also in *Kotoba wo koeru mono* (*More than words*, March 1996). Her thesis on oral narrative is that there is an extension of experiential sound and a necessary transference between the past and present in oral communication that can be seen to contribute, therefore, also to a sense of "presentness." Namely, the repetition of sound in the oral narrative aids remembrance for the speaker and the audience, as well as lends the narrative depth in its re-tellings, because the past is felt in the present moment. This understanding of orality is particularly relevant to the current study of individual utterance and narrative in Tsushima's writing. Like the murmur from "the well," the utterance is heard and becomes laden with cumulative discursive meaning as it is passed on and between individuals who produce, receive, and thus provide the narrative/utterance with shared meaning. In *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*, this understanding of oral transference is made visible in the communion of writer and reader in the close circumstance of intimate narratives most visible in the shared confessional narrative and in the confidential "letter" sections between the authors. Recalling the actual circumstance of Heian narrative as well, where speaker and audience members participate as interpreters and listeners together to actualize the story, Tsushima clearly draws the reader/listener into the re-created Heian narrative as well as into her contemporary text of her son's death. The particular closeness to the Heian woman's experience that the author feels is in turn felt by her "surreptitious" reader of the speaker's intimate letters addressed to the Heian author. The reader of Tsushima's text is textually interpolated, therefore, in a manner similar to the way the narrator has positioned herself in her relation to personal literature, with the author again demonstrating the discursive, communicative affect of past in present.

Considering the personal narrative, Tsushima has also remarked that the *watakushi shôsetsu* is like *ichi insho kataru*, "the telling of a single experience" that is somehow

shared by its readers, who, in turn, might say *kono keishiki.... nanka natsukashii*, “this landscape... it’s somehow familiar”(Kotoba, March 1996). The interpretive/experiential activity of the reader is emphasized in Tsushima’s reading of the Heian text as well as in the speaker’s interpolation of the reader/audience of her own personal fiction/text. Notably, Tsushima indicates how the action of the audience reading and *experiencing* the intimate narrative, importantly, will not only involve a correlation made between text and truth formed by the reader’s knowledge of the author’s actual life. It will involve also a correlation drawn by and into the reader’s own experience as it relates to a particular episode or emotion told in the personal narrative and shared in their real experiential world. Thus Tsushima’s narrated experience of her *shishôsetsu*, whether strictly true or not, expands into the sphere of possible experience, of both the possible psychological life of the speaker and of the possible world of the reader’s experience. This phenomenal knowledge realized by the reader of her fiction derives from the reader’s sense of something familiar between her words and his/her own knowledge or experience, just as the speaker of *Chased by the light of the night* has sensed familiarity with the Heian text.

Through the literary equation of two texts, the words of Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu*, like those of the Heian narrative for Tsushima, become what the author describes as *kurikaeshi no kotoba*, or “repetitive words”(Tsushima, *Kotoba*) in oral communication and personal narrative. The repetitive word is not only generated by an experience but its meaning is also shared, immediate, and cumulative. Words describing personal experience, therefore, are not understood in isolation, but generatively while they also simultaneously return to us from the past. Considering this discursive nature of the written word and experience for the narrator of *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*, all words become, in fact, *haramikomu kotoba*, or “laden with various meanings.”¹¹⁸ As such, words involve not

¹¹⁸ Kômori Yôichi, “Tsushima Yûko ron: haramikomu kotoba,” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* 33:10 (Aug. 1988):87-93.

only the relations between past, present, and future, as well as interpretation and the roles of writer and reader. The word laden with meanings also forms the basis for an understanding of narrative experience that can be extended to exploring the “I” in Tsushima’s writing.

Moving into a discussion of the self in Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu*, this lack of complete separation between past and present also relies on the disappearance of a distinction between different individuals’ experiences of life and death when it comes to the knowledge of what is both human and individual. That is, the interconnectedness of life is evident in Tsushima’s sense of the cyclical, shared, and permeable nature of death, for example, read between the Heian woman’s experience and her own. Just as the intertextual nature of written and read autobiographical experience is viewed as communication in a dialogue restored from “the well” of Heian literature, in a manner similar to this dialogic construction, the “I” is formed cumulatively in history and experience.

More precisely, the communicative act of the letters forms an oral dialogue of intimate history where one reader comes to know an authorial “I.” This “I” as presented shares another’s real, whether or not entirely factual, personal and emotional experience, as well as shares her experience with her readers. Likening worlds, experience, and texts, Tsushima parallels her narration of fate and suffering with the narrative “possible world” of the Heian text, thus understanding both the “I” of the present world and the Heian world effectively in part through her own experience. With the Heian world understood, therefore, from the reader’s own phenomenological experience, and with the author’s knowledge of this operation taking place for readers of her text, the narrated events come to be both immediate and intimate, whether strictly real or imagined, making the “actual” of less consequence than the affinity of experience encouraged by the author. Though the events may be more or less real as presented in the narrative, it is the emotional truth of a person’s history, re-created in fiction, that is received therefore as real. It is in this sensory,

psychological, and imaginative rather than positivist way that the “I” emerges in Tsushima’s personal fiction.

The reader comes to understand the various discourses from within which the localized utterance and the “I” of Tsushima’s text arise. Within this discursive conception of the “I,” the past plays a part in the “I” of the present. That is, the “I” is made up of experience, correlated through discourse and historical as well as physical experience. Notably, in another related discursive realm, the knowledge of peripheral circumstances, such as the narrator’s social milieu, also contributes to the realization of the unique individual in the text. More specifically, the discourse of the social encroaches on the discourse of the actual experience of the narrated body when the body is portrayed as difference, as an isolated, failed, strong, or socially marginalized woman.

Both the Heian speaker’s and the Tsushima narrator’s positions, their written bodies, are unique because they are the narratives of women and of isolated voices. The stories of the two women contribute, moreover, to a sense of their “I”’s marginalization as their utterances are spoken with the knowledge that they exist in tension with recognized forms of authority and outside the bounds of social acceptance. That is, their voices speak not only from the “well” of isolation and the individual experience of extremely difficult circumstances. They also speak from the peripheries of different societies as isolated and distinctive women who have chosen distinct paths (or who had no choice) and moreover chose to write about their lives. What the two authors’ disparate societies hold in common is that neither narrated possible world can fully accommodate or “accept” Nezame’s and Tsushima’s experiences as independent women, as single mothers, as sexual beings, as lovers, as members of society. While explicitly a narrative of sorrow, grief, and healing, *Chased by the light of the night* also implicitly addresses a society and readership that perhaps can be made to comprehend the isolated individuals’ experience and suffering. That is, the experience of Nezame in an illicit relationship breaking codes of courtly behavior, and of Tsushima as a “bad” single mother transgressing the multiple patriarchal

social codes of good conduct as a “failed” mother, are likened in their suffering and in their worlds of difference. Their “I”s are likened as unique in worlds both inside and outside patriarchal order and the morality from which their texts issue.

Through the dual components of the frame text and intertext of Tsushima’s *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*, we are given insight not only into Tsushima’s complex understanding of discursive narration, collective history, and the individual subject as well as the formation of the “I” in *shishôsetsu*. We are additionally made aware of the complex way Tsushima sees and narrates “other” experience and identity and, in addition, how this identity rises against the background of society. Despite displaying two seemingly separate worlds, there is no distance, ironic or otherwise, taken up by the author in her resituation of the recent with the thousand-year old past in the present. As such, a sense of individual “difference,” of an “other,” is paradoxically mutual to the texts and interwoven through two personal narratives treating two individual lives. The narrating “I” of either text, then, does not overcome the past even while it writes from a peripheral position in society. Tsushima brings to us the understanding that the individual lives within society and history, because and with a sense of both, even while the relations of its uniqueness and isolation are made recognizable. As readers of Tsushima’s intimate correspondence, therefore, we are privy through both personal texts to the alienation of an individual in society.

There is little sense that the individual as “other” is reconciled completely to her contemporary society in Tsushima’s writing and *shishôsetsu*. The Tsushima speaker is temporarily at (a difficult) peace, both in terms of her self and identity and in terms of social acceptability, with the arrival of springtime and the promise of life and rebirth at the end of her text. That peace is accompanied by metaphoric cherry blossoms —also a trope of classical Heian literature— in the text further underscores the presence and effemerality of peace, complete historical integration, and even self-integration. Though the author is now resigned to her past and has narrated her grief, the author’s narrated self is also seen as part in the cycle of life, an accumulative self of various experiences, including those

common to the Heian woman. In this portrayal of the “I,” Tsushima reveals a loosely cohesive sense of personal identity, an existential identity that is by no means conclusive.

In a sort of sequel to *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*, Tsushima’s “I” will effectively continue to change as she again treats the death of her son in *Mahiru e (To the daylight*, 1988) a year or two later. This latter personal narrative realistically echoes the mother-son relationship again, but this time it is narrated also through Tsushima’s own mother’s experience of the death of *her* child, that is, her mentally handicapped son (Tsushima’s brother) who died at 15. The bond between mother and son is not lost nor experienced in isolation: it is common to two generations. This superimposition of experience is clearly emphasized by Tsushima’s re-narration of her own life experience. As another “well” of experience, this [re]cognition again indicates the presence of a sense of cumulative, shared experience and identity in her writing. Further, the second narrative underscores that there is no sense of a wholly integrated authorial self in Tsushima’s personal fictions, nor is there a limit to the imaginatively real experience of the *shishôsetsu* self.

Through illustrations provided by *Chased by the light of the night*, the preceding sections have demonstrated the discursive construction of narrative and of the “I” employed by Tsushima in her *shishôsetsu*. Evidently, her texts show the *shishôsetsu* subject or body as a physical, historical, and experiential as well as an imaginative one constructed in language, texts, and society. Establishing the author’s presence in the literary work in this case is not a validation of an original or transcendent identity of an author, nor is the subject fixed or unified. The long-standing liberal humanist sense of self-identity, of the coherent, authoritative and integrated “I,” is not, it seems, the *shishôsetsu* “I” Tsushima narrates in her autobiographical fiction. Like the

subject created in discourse we have seen in Uno's re-writing of her "I," the *shishôsetsu* self here is at once authoritative though not definitive. Further, this "I" is fragmented, cumulative, as well as mutable because it is dependent on discourse as well as on the intent of reader and writer to find the subject in discourse. As Tsushima presents it, the subject is not comprehensive from beginning to end, nor is personal experience easily comprehensible. However, even with this discursive understanding of the shared experience of the "I," the self is structured as difference and as a unique individual. The next section joins this discursive self to the corporeal author. It will explore in addition how *shishôsetsu* is an intimate history made and shared by the public who also helps create the unique, authorial "I."

Autobiography and Hyper-reality

In order to understand better the interest in reading a Tsushima protagonist as a real "I," as well as for any other authors' fictional "I's", it is useful to look at the ways in which Tsushima's writing generally has been received. I will demonstrate how, in the case of her writing, texts "become" *shishôsetsu* in a strong default relation. That is, without necessarily possessing characteristics such as explicit, detailed, historical or accurate information about the author, and often only in the absence of indications to the contrary, readers who know aspects of the author's background tend to read these in her work, whether or not called for or warranted by the particular content of the text. As such, the generic term *shishôsetsu* can be seen to broaden, encompassing a much wider range of

personal writing than realistic representation and mimetically faithful narration might otherwise imply. In Tsushima's *oeuvre*, it becomes apparent how the written and read experience of the "I," and thus the self of *shishôsetsu*, incontrovertibly includes the imaginative, emotional, and psychological realms as well as the physical and historical body and its constitutive experiences.

To begin our study of the corporeal body of the author's *shishôsetsu*, Tsushima Yûko was born Tsushima Satoko in Tokyo in 1947. Biographies, notes appended to her texts, and anthologies almost always include the additional information that she is the daughter of the famous Japanese writer Dazai Osamu (Tsushima Shûji), who committed suicide when she was one year old, and who also wrote *shishôsetsu*. She is generally well-known by readers as well as the public: as the caring 13-year-old sister of a mentally challenged brother who died at 15; as a university graduate and partner in a strained marriage from 1970-1976; as a divorced mother of two young children, a daughter born in 1972 and a son, born after the divorce in 1976, who died tragically by drowning around age nine; and as a writer of disturbing themes. As daughters, sisters, lovers, mothers, authors, and women, the protagonists and characters of Tsushima's novels all are almost inevitably interpolated either more or less through the readers' biographical knowledge of details of what they may "know" of the author's "actual" life. Notably, the autobiographical contract equating narrator, author, and protagonist that Lejuene speaks of is more readily apparent in only some of Tsushima's texts, such as *Yoru no hikari ni owarete*. However, the strong intent of readers and critics generally to read Tsushima's texts autobiographically, to eventually classify them as *shishôsetsu*, as well as categorize her as an author of *shishôsetsu*, is worth further analysis.

Chôji (*Child of Fortune*, 1978, trans. Harcourt 1983) is the story of an unusual woman named Kôko Mizuno who extricates herself from relations with men and an early, estranged daughter to have another "baby" independently. Intending to embark on the road of single motherhood against social and patriarchal expectations for women, particularly

one of her age, the protagonist's pregnancy turns out to be imaginary, and the protagonist an unsettling study of ambivalence and obstinacy. Significantly, the translator prefacing the text also states that "[i]n her first-person writing, Tsushima is in the tradition of the highly subjective 'I-novel' genre which has dominated modern Japanese fiction" (Harcourt ix). Despite this additional biographical or personal information, the text *Chôji*, however, might not generally tend to fall under the generic category of *shishôsetsu*. It is written in the third person, and only rather loosely alludes to circumstances, such as single parenthood, social expectations, and acute alienation, that could be considered part of Tsushima's actual experience. Nonetheless, with this comment in the preface, the translator introduces the relation of historical and narratological equation.

Illustrating the compelling tendency toward further biographical readings, the translator continues by adding:

Like a number of her works, *Child of Fortune* introduces the figure of a mentally retarded boy. This character parallels Tsushima's own brother, who died when he was fifteen and she was twelve. She refers often to the influence of her early years spent in his company.

The autobiographical elements this work contains have been further developed in a series of short stories, *Hikari no ryobun* or *Realm of Light* (1979), which portray a newly divorced woman's life with her small child, but which, unlike the novel [*Child of Fortune*], are in the first person. (Harcourt, ix)

A translator's preface such as the one above, as well as the ubiquitous *kaisetsu* or commentary appended to Japanese novels,¹¹⁹ will automatically set the discursive stage

¹¹⁹ The *kaisetsu* is a brief discussion or *explication de texte*. Ariga makes the important observation distinguishing between popular and "serious" literature, that "Japanese

for a biographical exchange, where the verification of “fact” is made possible between the possible world of the text and the actual experiential world of the author and the reader. As in this instance, should the position taken in the commentary be biographical, which is often the case in Japanese studies—even of modern and contemporary texts—, this will doubtless provoke in the reader, if the author has not already stated explicitly her/himself that it exists, at least an interest in the possibility of applying the author= narrator= protagonist equation of autobiography. In the case of the *Child of Fortune* notes, many of the commentaries appended to Tsushima’s other texts, as well as additional peripheral criticism, there is a high propensity of critical approaches generally to indicate or to intend, at least in part, autobiographical readings.¹²⁰

Like Harcourt’s, Lora Sharnoff’s introduction to two of Tsushima’s stories also supplies provocative personal information which will likely affect our reading of the stories she subsequently translates, whether or not the themes are autobiographical or even related. The first story, *Island of Joy*, is about the narrator’s explicit sexual relationship with a man who ferries gifts to an isolated island of handicapped children. Her destructive relationship with her child’s father, from whom she is separated though is only uncertainly liberated from by her will, her independence, and her sexual relationship with the ferryman, is a crippling yet tyrannical subtext from which the ferryman may deliver her. *To Scatter Flower Petals*, the second story, is about the death of the narrator’s mother. When

literature is customarily divided into two major categories: *jun bungaku* (pure literature), often associated with “I-fiction” (*shishôsetsu*), and *taishû bungaku* (popular literature), written as entertainment for the masses” (374), the latter which are not accompanied by a full-fledged commentary or *kaisetsu*.

¹²⁰ Commentaries appended to *Danmari ichi* (218), *Yoru no Hikari ni Owarete* (424), and the biographical appendix “On the Author” of *Hikari no ryobun* are only three from among many commentaries on Tsushima’s texts to illustrate the propensity for biography.

the mother dies, the protagonist takes up an unusual position in an unconventional, triangular relationship with her mother's second husband and his lover.

The translator's introduction to the two stories, however, includes the following biographical information.

In 1972, Tsushima married a man involved in the theatre, but is now divorced and raising two children by herself. Although her fiction is not meant to be completely autobiographical, the influence of her background is obvious since many of her works deal with the emotions and problems faced by women raising children alone. Tsushima Yûko is also a rare figure among Japanese writers in being able to treat the issue of female sexuality in a very delicate, sensitive, and non-titillating way.(Sharnoff 249)¹²¹

Though the two narratives may not treat the "emotions and problems" Tsushima actually may have had as a woman raising children alone, the observer above discusses the "influence of her background" on the two stories and thereby also encourages autobiographical readings of her fiction. Does the translator intend for the reader to interpret Tsushima's stories as "real" when we read of the woman's sexual uninhibitedness

¹²¹ Notably, in a later translation of Tsushima's stories, *The Shooting Gallery and Other Stories* (1988), Harcourt seems to want to disengage readers from these sorts of autobiographical interpretations. Her biography here only states that: "Yûko Tsushima was born in 1947, the daughter of the famous Japanese novelist Osamu Dazai, who committed suicide in 1948. She lives in Tokyo with her daughter." Not only does the translator either obfuscate or refrain from encouraging a particular reading of the stories, but also implicitly indicates that the reader will have to glean pertinent biographical information elsewhere in order to read the texts as *shishôsetsu*.

and her search for an independent self? Or does the commentator wish the reader to recall Tsushima's actual home life as the daughter of Dazai and then as a fatherless child when reading of the second protagonist's atypical familial relations? The tendency to read or want to position Tsushima's texts as *shishôsetsu*, even while stating that they are often "not meant to be completely autobiographical" (Sharnoff 249), is apparently strong. Though a narrative may only approximate the author's actual experience, this preface exemplifies the tendency to read back to a corporeal and historical author, and therefore highlights the roles of narrative as well as all surrounding discourse for biographical interpretations of the *shishôsetsu* "I."

Biographical critical approaches to fictional texts additionally imply a *shishôsetsu* meta-discourse, such as is manifest in these interpretations of Tsushima's writings. That is, in the interests of finding a real authorial body behind a text, many traditional critical approaches rather unproblematically assume that the narrator is traceable to a historically integral, corporeal Author. Other critical approaches would seem less concerned with actual experience realistically represented than with imaginative experience, though nonetheless problematically assume the integrity of the Author. In both cases, criticism has tended to demonstrate a faith in the authorial body behind the *shishôsetsu* text. What this study aims to distinguish is not only whether or not realist modes of interpretation continue to be a productive approach to genre texts. The biographical impulse demonstrated in the general reception of literary texts and their represented authors shows a general public interest in maintaining the equation of protagonist, narrator, and author, and it is this *intent* that must be studied in genre criticism, rather than its specific ends in a specific body of the author. With this in mind, I hope to show that it is not necessary to assume the transcendence of the author for these biographical *shishôsetsu* readings. The author can be understood as material and as a presence in the text, but may also be understood simultaneously as a discursive creation. Acting in tandem with the reader in the production of meaning around the authorial body, then, biographical critical discourse thus can be

seen to contribute equally, along with the writer, to a discursive *writing of the body*, as I explore further below.

Like almost all Japanese and other critical approaches to Tsushima's writing, Harcourt's study above illustrates at least one specific fictional/historical correlation, among many others, often developed and accepted between Tsushima's childhood experience and her narrative presentations. The equation between Tsushima's personal exposure to and love for a mentally challenged brother and fictional narrative, for example, is read in the novel *Child of Fortune* mentioned earlier. The equation is also said to be manifest in the presentation of a mentally challenged son of a male character in *Yama wo hashiru onna* (*Woman running in the mountains*, 1980), as well as in at least two other short stories of a girl and her handicapped brother, namely *Rekuiemu, inu to otona no tame ni* (*Requiem for a dog and an adult*, 1969) and *Kitsune wo haramu* (*Conceiving a fox*, 1970). Traceable through other texts of Tsushima's *oeuvre*, the exploration and psychological portrayal of the handicapped boy is often attributed to first-hand experience in Tsushima's own life. Significantly, her close relationship to a brother with whom she spent a lot of time, before his premature and sudden death, apparently also included acting in a fashion, as some biographies state, as a lone "interpreter" of the generally incoherent sounds by which he expressed himself. Overall, the mentally challenged boy can be read as a trope in Tsushima's writing signalling alienation, as well as the possibility of avenues of unspoken communication between marginalized characters. Within this broad reading, the trope could be considered either a loaded narratological signifier or an element of personal and historical experience, or both. These interpretations carry the implication that the fictional or biographical readings become a measure of the intent of writer, reader and critic, as I continue to explore below.

Counter to the sort of biographical enterprise that strictly correlates Tsushima's personal history and her texts, however, is a historical-critical-intertextual-imaginative system of less factual correlation. Namely, this is one where Tsushima's exploration of the

mentally challenged child is not only traced to what the reader “knows” of her own apparent personal investment and experience, but is also creatively and intertextually traced to imaginative experience. This discursive reading of real experience in the *shishôsetsu* text in this case may be extended even to the interest Tsushima has displayed in the writing of William Faulkner, which has been noted by some biographers. The influence seems particularly evident in her literary echoes of the Benji character of Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*,¹²² and/or her apparent interest in the realm of primal human experience previously unexplored and inaccessible except via the idiot or the child. Here, the strictly biographical reading of the boy-figure as Tsushima’s brother is displaced somewhat by a biographical reading of Tsushima’s literary background. If the reader attends to her Romantic and imaginative incorporation of a Faulknerian type, it is nonetheless clear how the nature of reading and interpretation of *shishôsetsu* remains highly dependent on the receiver’s knowledge of surrounding discourse and on the receiver’s interpretation of the writer’s intent as well. In the absence of any historical or biographical information, for example, the “idiot” character even could be read as an entirely fictive representation of Tsushima’s more complex and heterogeneous interest in childlike innocence and worldly corruption. Paralleling the heterogeneity of Tsushima’s themes and narratological method with this abundance of possible exegeses, Tsushima’s

¹²² I am indebted partially to Prof. Inoue of Hokkaido University for this recollection of Tsushima’s influence. It should be noted also that Tsushima was affiliated with the literary and cultural publication and writers’ circle of *Bungei Shuto* (*Literary Capital*) as of 1967. Nakagami Kenji, another prominent novelist also influenced by Faulkner, was a writer for this magazine, and had maintained a lifetime acquaintance with Tsushima until his early death in 1992. Faulkner had won the Nobel prize in 1950 and had gained new popularity in Japan in the 60s and 70s, and his influence has been traced to the writing of these two Japanese authors among others.

overall *shishôsetsu* project could be interpreted as neither strictly historical and accurate, nor purely fictional, but simultaneously both.

The primal knowledge the mentally challenged figure represents often exists in tension with the “mature” individual in society or emerges from within disastrous familial relations, and is a victim of structural incoherence and blood ties that are often fraught with inchoate passions and quiet violence. Another common figure in Tsushima’s fiction, who is also an embodiment of the relations of difference and society, is that of the divorced woman and/or single parent, for which Sharnoff above and many others encourage a biographical reading of the author. She occurs often in Tsushima’s *oeuvre*, figuring in *Kusa no fushido* (*Bed of Grass*, 1977), *Hikari no ryobun* (*Realm of Light*, 1979), *Woman Running in the Mountains*, the collections *Suifu* (*Undersea*, 1982), *Danmari ichi* (*The Silent Traders*, 1982) and *Ôma monogatari* (*Ghost stories*, 1984), as well as in *Yoru no hikari ni owarete* (*Chased by the light of the night*) and *Mahiru e* (*To the daylight*, 1988), and other texts. The latter, as already mentioned, is also the story of a single mother coping with the premature death of her son, but also raises, like *Chased by the light of the night*, issues of the single, divorced woman and parent. In these cases again, the reader or critic is left to interpret the texts as containing elements of personal experience of Tsushima, or read the texts as presenting an imaginative figure signifying social alienation, individual independence, strife, or a woman’s experience, two extremes among many other feasible readings. Significantly, readings of individual experience versus a study of the more general human condition are introduced into this interpretive arena by these respective approaches.

The type of narratological multi-layeredness within which the mentally handicapped boy is presented, that is, between the layers of fiction and fact in Tsushima’s possible worlds of her texts and real life experience, is similar to the sort of layering visible, in some ways, in a text such as *Chased by the light of the night*. In this latter case, the alienation of the individual or woman is represented fictively by an intertextual and

transhistorical narration of a figure who is nonetheless real. *Shishôsetsu* exists in the presence of this discursive though biographical interpretation. Again, however, an additional reading is possible. Namely, that the stories of single women could be read, rather than as biographical in their exploration of a single mother's life, as completely fictive narrations of bloody histories and separate stories of isolated individuals who lead lives counter to social and institutional expectations. In this approach, the intent to read *shishôsetsu*, of course, would be absent and the text would be classified as fiction.

With a preponderance of biographical approaches in the critical background, however, Livia Monnet suggests the most common approach, that "there seems to be a consensus...that [Tsushima's] writings dramatize a limited number of 'themes' and 'motifs'"(382) and that her work contains historical elements. These include:

the meaninglessness and absurdity of family ties/blood relationships; the struggle of lonely, defiant women against the oppressive patriarchal institutions of marriage and the family and the regulative ideologies/fictions that support them; the revision of traditional (Japanese) definitions of motherhood and female sexuality; and the unusual, Faulknerian configuration of brother-sister incest, in which the brother is almost always mentally retarded and totally subjugated by a protective but authoritarian sister.(382)

Based on these themes, Monnet finds that "Japanese critics also agree that Tsushima's predilection for these topics reflects the writer's unusual life story and experience as a divorcee and single mother, and that many of her short fictions are autobiographical, employing narrative techniques close to those of the confessional *shishôsetsu* (I-fiction)"(382). Focusing on the *body* that is most central to the biographical discussion of the author's narratives, namely of the female protagonist, below Schierbeck perfectly demonstrates this tendency of critics to read "Tsushima."

Tsushima focuses on a single mother, either divorced or unmarried, to convey the significance of self-awakening as a woman. Her novels are full of the details of domestic life: the incidents and characters Tsushima has created are drawn from her own fatherless family. The main characters often get no warmth or support and have difficulties in forming meaningful relationships with others... Critics have observed that Tsushima has become an adept in writing about grief for her son's death and her difficult adjustment to life. (229-30)

Like earlier studies I presented, this seems a typical biographical description of Tsushima's protagonists and characters.¹²³ In addition to suggesting that the literature may have its own historical roots in Tsushima's own "fatherless family," the approach above demonstrates a complete critical conflation between the author and her protagonist. This even occurs to the extent that the author, according to Schierbeck, becomes *skilled* at writing events that critics readily assume *are* her life experiences, and Tsushima is "an adept in writing about grief." Tsushima is even described as an author whose actual life and individual understanding are apparent *despite* the fictional presentations her writing sometimes employs. "Her personal revelation is, however, skillfully camouflaged in the use of imagery drawn from Japanese legends and classics"(230), Schierbeck states, likely referring to the Heian text in *Chased by the light of the night*, to her ghost stories of *Ôma*

¹²³ Schierbeck's description is almost identical to a prior one by Yukiko Tanaka and Elizabeth Hanson, that "a basic motif in much of Tsushima's fiction is the stifling nature of family and blood relationships. The families portrayed in her stories are often disjointed and supply neither warmth nor support. The young female protagonists who leave such families fail to establish meaningful relationships outside"(Hanson and Tanaka 225).

monogatari (*Ghost stories*, 1984), and even to folkloric elements in other texts such as *The Silent Traders*.¹²⁴

Along with the popular tendency to correlate Tsushima's fictive presentations with the actual author, Tsushima is, moreover, generally read as narrating more or less "personal" experience in order to explore individualism, relations between individuals, relationships between the sexes, and the roles available to Japanese women in contemporary society. Though I would suggest a much looser discursive correlation between author, narrator, and protagonist than is the practice of realist or venerative approaches to an Author, autobiographical readings of her fiction additionally have been encouraged on a meta-discursive level even by the author herself in some instances. For example, along with the biographically-oriented *kaisetsu* written by another critic and appended to *Chased by the light of the night*,¹²⁵ Tsushima explains precisely the autobiographical nature of her project in her endnote, as already mentioned, entitled "From one solitude to another."

Various little things happen to people, including those who are writers. Even if it doesn't seem like a significant thing to one person, it carries various important meanings individually.

¹²⁴ *Ôma monogatari* is a collection of short stories including the story "The Chrysanthemum Beetle" (*Kikumushi*).

¹²⁵ The *kaisetsu* or explanation in the case of *Yoru no hikari ni owarete* is titled *Monogatari no hikari*, or "light on the story," playing on the *hikari*, or "light," common to Tsushima's title.

Even before beginning to write *Chased by the evening light*, I experienced one such thing. One of the members of my family suddenly left this world.
(417)¹²⁶

By explicitly mentioning the death of her son, Tsushima herself encourages an autobiographical reading of her text *Chased by the evening light*. Just as her translators and other commentators have correlated these narrative themes and motifs with experiences of Tsushima's actual life, the comment above reflects a general tendency, not only of writer herself but also of critics, to build a discourse of "Tsushima." The "T" of her writing then is continually developed and redeveloped in her fiction as well as surrounding discourse on her life, to the point where parallels are regularly sought between her writing and her personal life, and the author is finally designated a *shishôsetsu* writer.¹²⁷

This classification of Tsushima as a *shishôsetsu* author, or many of her texts as *shishôsetsu*, by her general audience does not seem particularly problematic. However, conceptions of the genre itself are not always clear. Hijiya-Kirschnereit, in the preface to her study of *shishôsetsu*, for example, states that though it is not clear what exactly constitutes *shishôsetsu*, one yet finds statements like "Tsushima Yûko's *Realm of Light* is not a *shishôsetsu*, but it is extremely *shishôsetsu*-like" ["Tsushima Yûko no Hikari no Ryobun wa *shishôsetsu* dewa nai ga 'kiwamete *shishôsetsuteki*' de aru"] (*Shishôsetsu* 4).¹²⁸ The patent implication is that specific elements, narrative features, or narratological

¹²⁶ See Appendix Seven.

¹²⁷ The Japanese *Dictionary of Contemporary Culture* (1994), examined further in chapter five, also lists Tsushima among five other authors as contemporary *shishôsetsu* writers.

¹²⁸ Tsushima's *Realm of Light* also presents the character of the single mother with children.

methods have been understood as generically necessary for *shishôsetsu* classification. In cases where Tsushima's texts are described as "close to *shishôsetsu*" and "*shishôsetsu*-like," this critical hesitancy with respect to the wholesale categorization of Tsushima's individual texts and her *oeuvre* as *shishôsetsu* is yet irrevocably and intuitively erased by the texts' general reception. Attention to the way *shishôsetsu* is performed or produced and received, therefore, underscores again the necessity of a pragmatic and heuristic approach to the genre, where *shishôsetsu* is discovered as a function of interpretation and intention rather than as a collection of strictly identifiable elements. Specifically, this approach attends to the *intent* of the writer and receiver, rather than only the structural elements, of *shishôsetsu*.

In Tsushima's *writing of the body*, the autobiographical subject is itself *constructed in discourse*. More specifically, the discourse that pertains to the creation of this "I" in *shishôsetsu* is biographical, fictional, critical, actual, historical, gendered, as well as textual and imaginative. That is, the "I" of *shishôsetsu* is a subject as much dependent on the author's presentation of his or her own individual and personal experience as it is an autobiographical or literary subject: both produce the real subject found in the text who is interpreted by the reader. The individual subject may be traced between any "facts" known of the author's life and may be known by tracing an identity between progressive fictional representations of the author.

Evidently, the reader who "knows" of Tsushima's family background may interpret mother figures in her writing, for example, as those resembling her own actual mother. A reader who has knowledge from surrounding discourse that Tsushima is herself a divorced mother of two, on the other hand, may choose to read Tsushima's fictional presentations in this light. Neither of these interpretations is strictly wrong or right. If we critically remove ourselves, therefore, from considerations of what makes Tsushima's work "extremely *shishôsetsu*-like" (Hijiya-Kirshner *Shishôsetsu* 4) or how it shows narrative techniques "close to those of the confessional *shishôsetsu*" (Monnet 382), we could focus, rather, on

the intent of the critic and receiver, on the agency of the author who may employ certain narrative or marketing strategies intended to encourage intimate and personal readings of her fictional texts, and on the purposes of the reader or critic who looks for biographical correlation. Through this discussion of intent, the commodification not only of the author but also the critical commodification of the genre and its components becomes apparent. As discussed in the reception of Uno's texts, the realization of *shishôsetsu* may prove to be also the manifestation of a desire for the unique individual in the literary and cultural economy. This intent and interest in reading the actual individual in a text, that we have seen fulfill a collective desire, for example, in Taishô society for the exploration of personal liberation, finally also encourages us not to delimit genre consideration to texts possessing an intrinsic set of deductively isolated or formally extant generic criteria.

With attention to how readers and critics identify the "I," I have examined "reality" and the "real" body in Tsushima's world as simultaneously discursive as well as corporeal and historical through autobiographical readings of *Chased by the light of the night* and other works. From this ground, I now move toward what I call the "hyper-real" in Tsushima's narrative world. This study will not minutely examine Tsushima's work for its precise or imprecise correspondence with historical "reality," therefore, whatever that is. Nor will it investigate the realist elements of her fiction that give rise to readings of her *shishôsetsu* self. I will investigate Tsushima's narrative technique that apparently "comes close" to that of "the confessional *shishôsetsu*" in her writing of individual experience in order to argue, as I began in earlier chapters, that it is the intent of both writer and critic that is the realization of *shishôsetsu*. *Shishôsetsu* is, in this sense, performed. Further, I will demonstrate that despite ultra-ordinary and imaginative circumstances portrayed in her texts, Tsushima's protagonists are nonetheless read biographically and historically. This study thus will show in turn how *shishôsetsu* can be understood as performed rather than as a transhistorically existing, strictly material presence of specific, structural or intrinsic generic elements. In addition, I argue that while Tsushima employs realistic devices and

naturalistic description traditionally associated with *shishôsetsu* and Naturalist writing in her texts, she couples these with an exploration of the fantastic and psychological lives of characters. Thus to describe her writing as “*shishôsetsu*-like” rather than as *shishôsetsu* is to employ and be restricted by traditional conceptions of the genre and to ignore the narratological and epistemological challenges of her personal texts in their pursuit of the individual and the ways in which we experience and know the world.

Though not always acknowledged, fictional elements will always, of course, immediately enter into the so-called “objective” autobiographical portrayal. But as Tsushima’s approach to “the well” in *Chased by the light of the night* also indicates, the “reality” of an event is also made possible through a reader “sensing the familiar” in the text and another’s experience. Tsushima’s own phenomenological approach to reading, history, and experience suggests that “reality” is also what we experience it as. That is, reality is how the body is oriented to and experiences a possible world. In addition to understanding the subject as real and material as well as created in discourse, Tsushima’s writing can thus also be seen to deliberately highlight the roles of individual perception and comprehension, as I investigate below in her narrative and epistemological alternative to empirical realism.

A ready point of entry into Tsushima’s use of parallel or alternate realities is seen in *Chased by the light of the night*. Agency is given to voices of the past in order to explore the potential for resolution amid Tsushima’s present world of individual incomprehension and chaos. Here, the psychologically traumatized protagonist begins to comprehend fate and life through the resonance of the “well” of literature, specifically through exchanging letters with the speaker of *Yowa no Nezame*. Through this presentation of (impossibly) co-existing narrative worlds of the Heian past and the present, Tsushima collapses historical and temporal progression in favor of demonstrating the circularity and repetition of experience. In doing so, she disintegrates simpler patterns of history as well as narrative teleology found elsewhere in stories of progression and awakening, and offers a mutually

experienced natural world within a multi-layered and syncretic narrative. Subject construction also occurs through the repetition of sorrow and death, remembered death, and the links between the dead and the living.

By continually moving between the past and the present, the interspersed chapters of the narrative not only echo the fragmentation of understanding and the reflexive struggle for individual comprehension in grief. *Chased by the light of the night* also presents a phenomenal reality. Namely, by introducing the past into the present, the protagonist understands how experience is shared, and the reader understands how the world is felt. Nature is what is subjectively discernible, and what is seen on the surface therefore involves a multiplicity and multi-layeredness that is only glanced by a concrete approach to “reality.” *To the daylight*, the aforementioned “sequel” of the text above, is thus a continued demonstration of the author’s knowledge that tomorrow, with more experience and insight, the present will be understood in a different way, and the past may be reconstructed again.

Illustrating another of Tsushima’s personal texts that integrates the past with the present, in this case through myth, *Danmari ichi* (*The Silent Traders*, 1982) is a story that features the legendary “silent traders.” The silent traders, from whom the story takes its title, are described by Harcourt as “‘mountain men’...[who] were isolated, nomadic remnants of an earlier people driven back by agricultural settlement, and among the village dwellers any recognition of their existence was tabooed” (*The Shōwa Anthology* 415).¹²⁹ Pushed back by civilization and progress, the silent traders of traditional folklore and the

¹²⁹ Harcourt adds: “Tsushima’s fiction makes many such allusions to tradition and folklore (familiar to Japanese readers) that parallel her contemporary plots” and that “the analogy adds a further dimension to the first-person story, while the symbolism of the nomads’ invisibility to the settlement has been explored more fully in the novel *Yamo o hashiru onna* (*Woman Running in the Mountains*, 1980)” (415).

past symbolically exist in the present in the story's Rikugien garden. It is evident immediately how Tsushima positions the past and the nomadic subject in antagonistic relation with contemporary society as the traders are kept within the confines of the civilized garden. The narrative suggests, in addition, the supernatural by way of the garden described as "another world," an "unknown woodland." While it has become a repository for unwanted pets, however, it is simultaneously a symbol of freedom from the human world, though also a place of fear for some. Nonetheless embracing, rather than warding off, the richness of this legend, the protagonist of this myth-entwined contemporary story embodies the possibility of the penetration of "other" realities through her recognition of their existence, and the narrative develops analogously with the infiltration of the young family into the woods.

Integral to my discussion of *shishôsetsu*, however, is the idea that even while the legend and the past are activated, the story can be considered *shishôsetsu*. In this story for which an historical correlative loosely can be found in the author's biographical information, Tsushima presents the contemporary life of a ten-year-old daughter, a boy of five, and a single mother. The speaker also states: "Like my own mother, I was one who couldn't give my children the experience of a father. That remained the one thing that I regretted"(trans. Harcourt 39). In this context of representation, it is imperative to note that Tsushima deploys the devices and tropes one might expect of the realist or naturalist fiction formerly associated with *shishôsetsu*, such as the everyday conversations between parent and child. However, Tsushima's narrative nonetheless ends: "Some sort of silent trade is taking place between the two sides. Perhaps my children really have begun dealings with a cat who lives in the wood"(trans. Harcourt 44). Clearly, the "other" world has entered into the present "reality" of the family and city, and the bounds of *shishôsetsu* expand.

By acknowledging the silent traders against the settlement's taboo, moreover, Tsushima not only breaks a social code but also does so in order to explore the past,

legends, myth, and the supernatural in the present, acknowledging the multiplicity of everyday existence. That she does so in a superficially realist text as it recounts an everyday activity performed by average individuals is particularly striking: the normal situation clearly incorporates the supernatural. Myth and belief are thus brought into implicit conflict with scientific objectivism, raising the tension for readers between fantasy/truth, particularly as this tension pertains to *shishôsetsu* classification and the narration of personal experience. However, the violence that Tsushima performs against the typical realist or naturalist narrative is a productive one suggestive of the wide possibilities of human experience and knowledge in the natural world. The co-relation Tsushima's text thus encourages between actual and imaginative realities is paralleled by the conflict between forms of authority and narration, specifically the forms of realism and objectivism traditionally associated with *shishôsetsu*. Through the silent trade with the past and with the ingestion of folklore into this story, Tsushima acknowledges the different forms of experience and knowledge that may be known in life and explored in *shishôsetsu*.

Simultaneously, in other relations that might elsewhere be irreconcilable, Tsushima also writes of marginalized experience in various forms. I described two earlier, in the figures of the mentally challenged boy and in the divorced, single mother/woman. In *The Silent Traders*, there are three relations that also serve to bring forward the tensions that I will show are central operations in Tsushima's *oeuvre*. These relations are: 1) people as opposed to animals, bugs, nomads, fairies, mountain men; 2) "normal," everyday society as opposed to the outsider, alien, blood, margin, idiot, female; 3) realism, traditional *shishôsetsu* as opposed to myth, oral literature, relation, fantasy, and Tsushima's and non-traditional *shishôsetsu*.

In each of the tensions of Tsushima's fiction described here, the latter half of each of the equations, for example represented by the animal, the outsider, and fantasy, all penetrate the world of their counterparts even though they are at times irreconcilable. By illuminating these and other relations Tsushima explores, in the study that follows I show

how the author interrogates social and worldly “givens” versus “possibilities” in support of her overall suggestion of an alternative epistemology in her *shishôsetsu*. This is, namely, her suggestion of a different system of knowing, of an alternative method of investigation, and of an interest in individual perception in *writing of the body* and the world. Significantly, this epistemology is presented through what I have called the “hyper-reality” of Tsushima’s texts and that will pose, in turn, a challenge to the realist/naturalist prerogative of *shishôsetsu* criticism.

Ways in which we perceive everyday existence are brought into question in many ways in Tsushima’s *oeuvre*. The individual incomprehension that is suffered during what seem to be everyday conversations is also featured in Tsushima’s dialogues where people talk past each other. This is seen, for example, in *Kusa mura* (*Tangled grass*, 1989, also trans. *Clearing the Thickets*; among stories translated by Harcourt in *The Shooting Gallery*). This collection of Tsushima’s short stories often features *kamiawanai kaiwa*, or “conversations like scissor blades that don’t match up.” Though presented in physical configurations together, the dialogues of two characters often are not so much antagonistically engaged with each other as simply speaking from disparate individual positions or remaining self-absorbed. Within narratological frames, in addition, that would suggest to the reader that we can expect a sensible, predictable, or normal interaction, the sort of mis-conversations Tsushima presents are situations of violent incoherence rather than head-to-head conflict, though conflict is also rife.

Kusa mura also contains the following paralyzing passage of a single, pregnant girl returned home and now helping to clear the tangled thickets. Though there is continual strife in the narrative, it generally leaves readers unprepared for the violence below.

She couldn’t make out her mother’s face in the shadow. The rustling of leaves grew indistinct. Flat on her back on the ground, the daughter smiled up at her. Under her mother’s scrutiny she couldn’t help feeling her body must be a

pathetic sight. She was unable to move. She gazed up at the sky: nothing to see. So it was three o'clock?

The mother touched her daughter's abdomen.

"...Seems all right, doesn't it? Well then, I'm going to see about having it out.

The daughter nodded, and watched the motions of her mother's hands. The time had come sooner than she had expected, but—understandably from their point of view—they must want to get this business over with, and it couldn't be helped. Her mother seemed tired too. She began moving her hands with quiet dispatch.

The mother's sweat fell in drops on her abdomen. Having entrusted its handling to her mother, she realized for the first time how acutely she wanted to place a new life in this light-filled outer world. Mis-shapen though it might be, she wanted it to give a healthy newborn cry. She distrusted her mother's intentions. But she didn't seem able to voice her misgivings. A more suitable place, more care, more time...the things she wanted to say stuck in her throat.(trans. Harcourt 119)

In the sparse, galvanizing prose common to the horrifying account of the accident in *Chased by the light of the night*, Tsushima carefully employs a naturalistically detailed setting to demonstrate the almost stupefyingly "normal" behavior of individuals in an emotionally and psychologically explosive and malign orchestration of isolation. It is almost superfluous to underline how the above narrative presents, as many of Tsushima's texts do, "dark" themes and motifs. But as one critic also insightfully adds, these themes feature "the meaninglessness and absurdity of family ties/blood relationships [and] the struggle of lonely, defiant women against the oppressive patriarchal institutions of marriage and the family and the regulative ideologies/fictions that support them"(Monnet 382).

In light of the above and other passages, I vehemently advocate a productive rather than pejorative understanding of the “dark” themes and “lonely, defiant” women that abound in Tsushima’s *oeuvre*. The deeply human, political and philosophical potential of Tsushima’s writing may be realized in the very tensions she presents, as well as in the individual and collective anxieties and ideologies she exposes. Clearly, the central relation I discussed in earlier chapters of “difference,” of *shishôsetsu* portraying the unique individual experience, might be realized in Tsushima’s fiction in unparalleled proportions and in radically new dimensions. That the girl above could watch her mother abort her fetus with choking detachment, while desperately wishing to voice her discomfort and misgivings, is indicative of actual and real strife between mother and child. The ideology of the parochial family and the assumption of mother-love are completely destroyed. Tsushima represents circumstances of the social and familial institutions that do not allow the individual a voice, and do not acknowledge her singularity or her feelings. In this way, Tsushima narrates the inchoate scream. This sense of oppression is like that more generally experienced by the voice of the repressed individual, who is, of course, also the subject of *shishôsetsu*.

Significantly, the abortion scene above takes place in the overgrown thicket, underlining the physical, menacing profusion of reproduction gone amok. The thick grass thus becomes a crucible of civilization (cutting, progress) and nature (profligate growth), a crystallization of “difference” not unlike that raised by acknowledging the “silent traders” of the park in the previous short story. The thicket also highlights notions of individual perception in its confused juxtapositioning of the real, physical world and the imaginary or experiential realms, acutely distilled as the death of one person at the hands of another in a narrative that demonstrates no desire to distinguish between “real” and “imaginary” experience. With *Clearing the Thickets*, more tensions are literally added to the previous list of relations in Tsushima’s *oeuvre*, not the least of which is that of the obfuscating versus logical or intelligible narrative. In this multiplicity of tensions Tsushima calls forth,

we begin to understand how the author-protagonist and other characters, and their experience, come to signify the unique, individual experience, particularly that of the margins.

In Tsushima's fiction and *shishôsetsu*, we learn how the abject previously or elsewhere silent and concealed is made visible. This occurs through Tsushima's narrative tensions and interpenetrations. Similar to Kristeva's abjection, that is "above all ambiguity," abjection in Tsushima's writing also "acknowledges the subject to be in perpetual danger" in that it exists in relation to forms of authority, structure, sense-making, and normative society. Further, as with abjection that "does not respect borders, positions, rules, [and] disturbs identity, system, order" (*Powers of Horror* 4), everyday reality, "normal" existence and human relationships are all systems that are provocatively challenged in Tsushima's writing. The incomprehensibility and unacceptability of her subject and her chosen representations, moreover, suggest how evaluation of her subjects may be followed through to the treatment of Tsushima's narratives —as those institutionally and perpetually rejected.

The incoherence Tsushima employs in the unacknowledged "conversation" above between a mother and her incomprehensible daughter, who is dismissed by the mother as one "born that way. So it's hardly fair to blame her" (Harcourt 110), is explored also in narrations of the mentally challenged boy mentioned earlier. His communication, like Faulkner's Benji, is rendered "intelligible" only by those who listen, and his interpreters are themselves often marginalized. Tsushima thus presents fertile, female, adult protagonists, as well as autistic boys, whose voices go unheard by their lovers and partners, parents, family members, and others in society. Not only, then, does Tsushima represent realities that interweave past and present, but her texts also present "concrete" reality alongside that of the autistic world and alternate avenues of communication, the unvoiced. Societal marginalization and ambivalence are treated in experiential realms, in the fantastic

and the psychological lives of presented characters, as well as through incorporation of classical literature, folklore, and even ghost stories into fictional literary texts.

Tsushima's autobiographical novels and stories can be described as almost always fraught with uncertainty. Through her writing, the author explores agonized conflicts that reflect the positioning of the protagonist or subject as "difference" in or against society. The protagonist's positioning against social acceptability is not unlike Tsushima's treatment of the experience with the silent traders, for example, and social taboo: the intercourse between the fantastic and realistic in Tsushima's texts operates similarly by colliding and combining together in her writing. Like the confusion implied by the texts and that individuals experience in the texts, Tsushima's narrative ends are characterized generally by suspension, thus suggestive of danger and possibility rather than by a resolution that might imply safety and "intelligibility."

Though described as a "dark" or "difficult" writer who presents a "nihilistic view" (Schierbeck 230), Tsushima confirms her social engagement by deliberately positioning protagonists within tensions involving what are generally taken as norms. Social practice and patriarchal institutions, such as marriage, are denaturalized, not absent, in her writing. Tsushima thus explores radically alternative possibilities for the *individual* in society, not only for the female individual nor only for her "self." The author's complex understanding of the alienated individual who does not participate in regular, accepted institutions and ideologies is paralleled by the narrative method of Tsushima's narratives, in such as *The Chrysanthemum Beetle*, *The Shooting Gallery*, and *Tangled Grass* to name but a few, that deliberately antagonize typical readings that might elsewhere separate the real world and the imaginative, the objective from the subjective realms. Thus it is in narrative worlds involving subjective perception, uncertainty, and difficult comprehension that her subject and epistemology are most sublimely presented and discovered.

Regarding the inter-play of fantasy and reality in her texts, present "reality" is presented naturalistically in Tsushima's texts by the details of the protagonists' dirty

kitchens, windows opening onto walls, and dismal domestic surroundings. These contemporary spaces are also peopled with unromanticized characters such as the abusive father in *Woman Running in the Mountains* and the bitter widow for a drowned husband [Dazai Osamu] in *Undersea*. Bugs are presented in *The Chrysanthemum Beetle* and *Island of Joy*, and the police are described in *Chased by the light of the night*, as well as the living spaces and institutions of everyday existence. Elements of the everyday are made to co-exist with alternate conceptions of “reality” which verge on fantastic or dream-like, hyper-real states as evident in the circumstance of *Clearing the Thickets*. Tsushima consistently juxtaposes the quotidian and its objects with refracted perception, with subjective, mental and emotional conceptions of reality viewed by her protagonists opening onto a hyper-reality. As Harcourt describes:

Drawing on all these elements, a typical Tsushima work will take freshly observed domestic details—dead insects accumulated in a light fixture, say, or a bug being flushed down the kitchen sink—and give them a powerful significance as it develops such themes as blood relations, sexuality and the tie between the sexes that the birth of a child represents, death and the ties between the dead and the living.

These implications are often threaded through a deceptively loose structure reminiscent of the *shishôsetsu* but which in fact sets up a resonance or impact all the more powerful because it is unforeseen...*Danmari ichi* (*The Silent Traders*, 1982), is a striking example of this technique.(414-15)

For Tsushima, “reality” apparently does not only encompass visible phenomena and the everyday. Tsushima’s texts present the intellectual, emotional, and psychological reality of characters’ experience through the fantastic and imaginary.

Finally, the last task of this section is to install the present reading of experiential reality against the background of modern *shishôsetsu* and modern critical approaches to the genre. By way of comparison, it is apparent how Naturalist writing advocated *heimen byôsha* (“flat description,” a term used by Tayama Katai in 1908) and *zettai mushinen* (“no [personal] thought at all”) or *ichigen byôsha* (“single-dimensional description,” as Iwano Hômei [1873-1920] described in 1911). The critical impulse that came to guide modern *shishôsetsu* and genre criticism shared this interest in unmediated description and this led to a way of understanding *shishôsetsu* as demonstrating what Fowler calls the “written reportative style”(127). Early *shishôsetsu* authors can be seen to have attempted to present events without evaluation, interpretation, or analysis, as was said to be apparent in their confessional, uninhibited presentations of their individual, personal life. *Shishôsetsu* came to be considered a “faithful” arrayal of the author’s own faults for public purview, even for their own edification.

Eventually, however, we witness how critical writing on the genre helps cement views of what it describes as a “scientific” impulse of the individual to expose himself in his own texts. That is, *shishôsetsu* criticism became a realist enterprise itself, in a sense effectively trying to expose individual, historical authors by recognizing only those texts which displayed a ready correlation between history and the narrative, as critics verified, for example, by emphasizing the identificatory function of the *bundan*. This positivist and empiricist critical approach to the subject and its narrated experience in modern Japanese *shishôsetsu* thus extended on an institutional level in the entrenchment of verisimilitude as criteria for identity.

Through perhaps upheld in examinations of Taishô and early Shôwa literature, this critical tendency breaks down when one allows for the co-existence of a wider range of “truth” in *shishôsetsu*. As the above study of the real body and the hyper-real of Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* suggests, traditional *shishôsetsu* theory and definitions become unable to address what the reading public and some critics, less theoretically and perhaps

more intuitively or heuristically, consider *shishôsetsu* in both modern and contemporary fiction. Nakamura Marao's *shinkyô shôsetsu* ("mental attitude novel," 1924) and his interest in the attitudes of the author, as well as Kume Masao's interest in the I-novel's incorporation of a mental attitude (1925) are evidence of an interest early on in the "interior" of the individual displayed in I-writing. As I will investigate further in chapter six, interpretations of this "interior," however, have clearly changed with the different prerogatives of literary criticism over the twentieth century. When Fowler states, therefore, that "the myths of sincerity and authorial presence were born"(xxvi) based on his study of the *bundan*, we might question the realist supposition in the background against which this observation is made.

In Tsushima's texts, the author not only narrates "actual" experience and events, but, as remarkable as the slippage in magical realism, she portrays hyper-real imagined worlds rich in association, and redolent of possibility that are nonetheless "actual"—and autobiographical. Tsushima's writing is somewhat inadequately treated, therefore, by approaches featuring the readers' "faith" in the ability of the writer to present himself directly, and the support of the author's "faithful transcription of a reality there for all to see"(Fowler xxvi). Faith in these cases implies the actual author, mimetic representation, and the realist narrative, though I have demonstrated that it is possible to focus rather on authorial and critical intent in the performance of *shishôsetsu*. Tsushima's texts draw attention to the intent of readers and critics in actively determining the authorial body in *shishôsetsu*. Through her narrations of pain and struggle and joy of the individual subject, that she presents by telescoping history, the present, and the fantastic or imaginable into a kind of immediate yet oneiric metahistory, the reader is surely drawn into determinations of the *shishôsetsu* self in Tsushima's fiction.

To conclude this section on the real body and hyper-reality, I return to the remark that Tsushima's narrative worlds are often not immediately fathomable. They are "dark." Some critics even have described this quality in Tsushima's works as nightmarish, as is

likely exemplified by works such as *The Silent Traders*, *Yukue fumei* (*Missing*, 1973), and *Tangled Grass*. Regardless of whatever evaluative criteria these appraisals suggest, Schalow and Walker offer the valuable insight that “within an essentially realistic mode of fiction, Tsushima uses fantasy (and especially the fantasy of humans becoming insects) to critique modern humanistic subjectivity and encourage readers to view their place in the world from outside themselves, in the margins”(12). It is evident that the hyper-reality presented in Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* must not be circumscribed by modern realist approaches to the Japanese subject that lie at the heart of generic readings of *shishôsetsu*. Contemporary subjectivity is, for Tsushima, fragmented, mutable, and discursive, and it is in this realm where individual difference and the unique subject are performed.

In Tsushima’s imaginative presentation of self through difference and marginalization, in all its disturbing aspects, the author also achieves a public exploration of the tensions between the individual and society. These tensions, that may lead to emancipation or repression, engage the social in ways Uno’s transgressive *new woman* writing, as well as other “I’s” of *shishôsetsu*, have accomplished. As is constantly implied throughout Tsushima’s *oeuvre*, the exploration of the individual operates along with the author’s implicit knowledge that society may oppose or fear the revelation of truth of the individual. Nonetheless, with our knowledge of the imaginative realities Tsushima presents comes an understanding of how the narrative truth of individual experience must be written and will be read.

Tsushima’s Novel of the “I”: The Real Body

By examining the real body and the hyper-real written and read in Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* and fiction in previous sections, I have demonstrated that the epistemological method the author employs in the interrogation of subjectivity highlights phenomenal experience. This

method of knowing the world and the body through experience, though contrasted to the positivist and empirical methods of knowing contained in realist approaches to narrative, nevertheless addresses society and the “real” world in which we live. In this light, the following section will continue this exploration of the ways Tsushima writes of the real body and its experiences in the world, and will present her *shishôsetsu* as socially engaged.

As mentioned in chapter two, the desiring, passionate body that Tayama Katai revealed in his personal fiction, *Futon*, paved the way for other textual confessions of the body. Though I will return to Katai’s body in chapter five, for the following discussion it is significant that when Karatani discusses the originality of Katai’s *Futon*, he couches his description of the Katai/Tokio body in a psychological, religious, Foucauldian understanding of repression and expression. Describing how “one must keep watch over one’s ‘interiority’ at all times”(79), he refers to the repressed adulterous feelings expressed by the protagonist that must be scrutinized and that remain under surveillance (79). This case of the surveillance and scrutiny of passion, particularly the sexual, is the *shishôsetsu* expression itself. In other words, attention to this tension highlights how it is produced by the knowledge of the individual’s difference in society. In this reading, one’s interiority or passion, which must otherwise be checked, is reproduced in personal writing as an explicit, self-conscious evocation of the tension between the “other,” the self, or one’s “dark, ugly sexual reality” and feelings, and society, the dominant, or whatever behavior, in this case, is morally acceptable.

In Tsushima’s writing, interiority is part of the psychological and emotional states of individuals whose expression or bodies and sexuality are repressed. The repressive nature of social institutions and ideologies, seen, for example, in the “norm” of the family, or a “mother’s” behavior, or a “female’s” role in a relationship, is raised and interrogated by Tsushima’s narratives and through her characters interactions that are often fruitless, disastrous, and incomprehensible. The tension of difference the individual represents, or the act of surveillance the author or protagonist undergoes or demonstrates, thus is not an

action remaining on the level of a personal, authorial self-consciousness. The repression is the interpolation of a social and institutional surveillance of the body, of the internalization of social structures and normative behavior. Here, Foucault's discussion of the panopticon of *Discipline and Punish* is applicable for his insight into how the mechanisms of social surveillance are ultimately internalized in the body and become the disciplinary apparatus through which the authority of the prison acts. Eventually we understand this tension produced by transgression and see how the emergence of the protagonist or difference, the "I" of the (sexualized) body, depends on the emotional and psychical construction of the speaker "I" in simultaneous relation to society and its institutions. In Tsushima's works in particular, this marginalized body gains expression through narrations of emotional experience and psychological alienation.

In her *oeuvre*, sex or treatments of women's sexuality and their experience have been diversely described as writing "from a woman's viewpoint and in precise language" (Harcourt 415), or as writing "in a very delicate, sensitive, and non-titillating way" (Scharnoff 249). These rather clinical descriptions of Tsushima's writing fail to underscore the richness of the danger, the destruction, the dismal circumstance, and the dark weight that her descriptions of sexuality often carry. Significantly, Tsushima's narrations explore not only women's active versus passive sexuality, but also the deep, productive associations of sex with life, strife, and death. Tsushima explores liberated, uninhibited, *undelicate* and "real," rather than romanticized, love and lust between men and women. This real body in her work calls our attention to the most libidinal and liminal tensions of Tsushima's narrative worlds, as well as to the most intellectual and philosophical dimensions of her writing. These tensions are, namely, that of institutionalized and sanctioned sexuality present in configurations of marriage, the nuclear family, and a heterosexual economy, as opposed to "true" unromanticized female sexuality, undelineated sensuality, and the *individual*. Once again, the dichotomies these present are echoes of the polarities drawn earlier for her writing, specifically between

safety in the givens naturalized by normative society, and the possibilities contained in the danger of transgressive acts.

In *Island of Joy*, a short story mentioned in the last section, unrepressed sexuality and individual desire is expressed by the female protagonist through complex levels of communication with her lover, “the driver.”

I would wait for him to come to my side, and as soon as he did I would leap on him like a frog. I thrust myself onto his soft, warm body with all my might. I loved that one moment. It is a feeling which only human beings can taste. While I fully explore a naked man with my entire body, I realize that I, too, am human.(trans. Scharnoff 250)

The driver, misunderstanding the protagonist’s exertion in bed, says, “You really love it, don’t you?”(251). Interpreting surface behavior even more superficially, he does not recognize that, for her, the sexual act is much more than the (im)possibility of satisfying her sexual desire. Camouflaged by her sexual activity in this scene, the protagonist feels a simultaneous ambivalence and detachment both toward him and toward sex that he does not begin to understand. Her engagement in some sort of personal search, perhaps for peace, freedom, or “human” communion is what is most important to the woman, and is evidently least articulated and least recognized.

Tsushima’s portrayal of unromanticized sexuality and “woman”¹³⁰ is significant, particularly as the disclosure of self in *shishôsetsu* is so closely associated with the notion of sexual intimacy and self-exposure. The knowledge of patriarchally acceptable norms of

¹³⁰ I use “woman” to indicate individual experience and the discursive, mutable subject, as opposed to “Woman,” as the latter indicates the “eternal female,” shared female experience, and the reification and romantic idealization of women’s sexuality.

behavior of women is present in the background of her narrative, most obviously embedded in her estranged husband's accusation that she is an unfit mother. Chrystallized in the sex scenes that are a struggle of human liberation, communication, and communion, Tsushima's writing further, at times almost desparately, calls for the recognition of individual difference and acknowledgement of the complex ways in which unique individuals experience the world.

The thoroughly narrated intimacy of a sexual relationship is almost unbearably exposed in the above autobiographical fiction. However, as Tsushima implicitly demonstrates, even this *unbearability* is closely tied to repression and to our internalization of the bounds of social acceptibility and "typical" sexual relationships. *Kusa no fushido* (*A Bed of Grass*, 1977), a story from roughly the same period as the one above, contains another confined scene from an intimate, domestic space. Though the protagonist's partner wishes to move, he has not at this point. Significantly, in her spare prose again, Tsushima captures and presents the emotional and psychological despair, stupidity, and humanity of the couple with almost alarming intimacy, from which, for the reader, there is no escape.

Takashi stood up and came toward me. I smiled at him timidly and started to explain myself. Takashi walked around in front of me, looking annoyed. My explanation only made him angrier. Soon I was protecting myself from his fists. Why had he called me over in the first place? We should have kept our mouths shut and ignored each other, I thought. I felt bitter toward him.

What I meant to tell Takashi was that I had lived alone with my mother for a long time after my older brother had died, and I was accustomed to the way we had lived. It is true, I told myself; I am comfortable living this way, with both of us turning our faces away from each other.(trans. Hanson and Tanaka 234)

Tracing the cold living arrangement with her lover/husband back to that with her mother, Tsushima relates two stories of ambivalence and abuse. Both may not be entirely devoid of whatever might be “love” under these impossible circumstances. However, it is crucial to recognize that in no way does Tsushima wish to present characters in typical patriarchal and familial relations, nor does she wish to redeem and return them at any time to “safe” circumstances and amenable relations.

Later in this same story, she describes Takashi’s drunken behavior. “Like a little girl with a large, violent father, I was afraid to be alone with Takashi. I was also afraid of leaving Takashi, even though by then he seemed like a slimy reptile with a long slender tongue and tail. Pretending to be asleep in a room with a bar at the door suited my ambivalent state of mind”(239). The violence of men, as well as the traps of social acceptability, feminine behavior, and patriarchal authority implied in the woman’s decision to stay with her man, in this narrated experience are as invasive as the encroaching snake-like figure Takashi becomes. However, as elsewhere in her body of writing, this scene is not a social comment so much as it is an exploration of individual experience and psychology. Redolent with Freudian implications, patriarchal violence is also paradoxically that which the protagonist internalizes and even seeks.

Returning repeatedly to the protagonist’s tendency to seek out weak, rather than strong and powerful, characters, even her mother berates this character trait in the narrator. Clearly, Tsushima’s exploration of human psychology in the intimate sexual relationship is not only unromanticized and ambivalent. She also explores the danger and destruction that are also part of occasionally compulsive human relations. Concerning self-exposure in the *shishôsetsu*, though it may no longer be strictly confessional writing, and though “contemporary writers have turned away from confession in the narrow sense”(Karatani 87), Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* certainly have not abandoned the structuring of difference of the unique individual in all its masochistic unacceptability.

Houyou (An Embrace, 1984) treats sexual desire and the psychological motivation guiding desire in a different way. In this case, the exploration of the individual through sexual intimacy involves a communion with life, loss, and the dead through other individuals. The protagonist of this *shishôsetsu* story, who has lost a father to suicide at an early age, begins to explain her friendship with another woman, Sumiko, who lost her mother to suicide at 16. Seeing each other only irregularly to catch up on their children and their adult lives, the protagonist admits: “My association with Sumiko was tinged with guilt; I would have liked to avert my eyes, if I could, from our shamefaced inability to let our interest in each other’s lives drop”(trans. Harcourt 132). Their only bond, it seems, forms from their mutual and morbid curiosity regarding the other’s (in)ability to cope with life after a parent’s death to suicide.

When Hirota, a man who loses his wife Megumi to suicide, comes into the protagonist’s life after an absence, she embraces him. Hirota invites her out for a late-night drink, and she kisses him in the street.

I heard him sigh. He moved his cheek away and touched mine with his lips. I did the same. My lips brought the sensation of his skin more pleasantly than my cheek had done. Our faces gradually met and we put our lips together. We made sure how our tongues felt, too. Inside his mouth was hot. I wanted us to undress there and then and assure ourselves of the other parts of our bodies. (trans. Harcourt 137)

Though sexually aroused, the protagonist breaks away. “There’s someone else I’m close to—a woman, but...we have the same thing in common as you and I...That’s why...”(trans. Harcourt 138). Then she understands: “I was trying to explain, to apologize to him: two of us are bad enough, but if three people huddle together like that I’d be trapped by the eyes for certain. I’m not yet able to forget the eyes of the dead gazing down on us as one would

look at a model, and I don't know when I will; for now, all I can do is protect those who are alive by pretending not to have noticed"(trans. Harcourt 138).

The narrator is enveloped in guilt over the paucity of friendly feeling underlying her association with Sumiko. Then the sexual arousal she experiences with Hirota is stymied by her understanding that suicide again would bond her to someone. Under eternal surveillance, the protagonist recognizes that by engaging in another relationship with death there is no possibility of overcoming the past, if that is what is even called for. The arousal associated with the union therefore is unabated, left unrealized in this complex rendering of heterosexual coupling which features again the deep psychology of individual drives.

Through these diverse examples, it is apparent how Tsushima repeatedly treats individual the "woman" in her *shishôsetsu* and other fiction as a "real" body. From within psychologically complex and even destructive sexual relationships, in ambiguous relationships with friends and others, and in stifling, uncaring, and abusive familial circumstances, Tsushima continues to narrate the marginalized and particularized experience of a real "I." Protagonists of *shishôsetsu* such as those of Katai and Ôe Kenzaburo among many others thus remain in contrast to Tsushima's speakers who, on the other hand, are clearly incompatible with the tropes usually engaged by courtly ideals of romanticized, heterosexual love, as she chooses to articulate experience of the unallied body. Typical configurations of the love/sex heterosexual relationship in Tsushima's subversive *oeuvre* are treated ironically, irreverently, ambiguously, and even fantastically by Tsushima in order to explore how people know and experience the contemporary world.

This positionality obviates an implicit social commentary from the margins, as expressed by her characters who challenge cultural constraints, ways of knowing, and investigating life. Tsushima's protagonists and characters are often undesirable and lonely women, like the mother in *Missing*, or as "overly" desiring, like the female protagonist in *Island of Joy*. "[D]estabilizing...often labeled deviant, abnormal, dangerous, and threatening"(Ariga, 53) female characters are presented in Tsushima's fiction as sensual

and sexual women. As single parents beyond the sanction of the patriarchal system, Tsushima's women "have real bodies... bodies that may be injured or diseased, bodies that excrete and menstrate"(Ariga 53). Her *shishôsetsu* present the "real" body of an "I."

This "active" female body, moreover, becomes a locus of social condemnation and institutional marginalization. At the same time, however, for Tsushima this body is also where the abject is the transgressive, and this is where the possibilities of life lie. Illustrating first how the female body becomes a target and source for masculine anger and patriarchal distrust in Tsushima's writing, I look to the social condemnation of her many female characters. In *Kusa no fushido* (*A Bed of Grass*), Kumi, a female friend of the protagonist, is attacked as follows.

Kumi had had frequent warnings from both her employer and the staff at the day-care center. She had grumbled more about this criticism since the beginning of April. They said things like, "You're careless about time and the way you dress. You should be more careful for the sake of your child. You should go to bed earlier. If you expect to leave work early because of your child, you ought to work harder while you're here. Instead of eating out so much, let your child have some home-cooking. Can't you at least wear clothes that don't show your skin? You make us feel embarrassed..."

Criticism of the mother is not only evidence of how she unsettles them: it is also aimed at her body. And Kumi knows this.

"They are only afraid of me because I'm a woman," Kumi told me. "Once I leave this room, I feel like there's nothing but men out there..."(trans. Hanson and Tanaka 261)

The anger of members of social institutions, of the work-place and the day-care, finds a target in the ill-kempt, illimitable female body. They find her beyond their authority and their control but uncomfortably present in their midst. Most palpably, Kumi's critics do not want to dress her so much as repress her.

The narrative clearly acknowledges the pervasive nature of social morality. It is important that Kumi's rich, fertile, messy and thus threatening body is also a focus of the female speaker's attention and discomfort as well. "I held the camera and quickly took a picture. The edge of Kumi's pink panties and some white skin showed between her tight jeans and sweater. Kumi was plump and had a hard time finding clothes that fit well"(ibid. 230). Without shying away from narrating the fear or disgust felt for the body even by women, Tsushima discloses how Kumi's body, with its big breasts and wide hips, is also a source of discomfort for her, the protagonist. Both like and unlike the photographer, the author of the story aims her narrative lens, but does not pull it too quickly from the body. Further demonstrating that there is no united, impregnable front of women in the narrative, the narrative includes this observation of the narrator watching Kumi breastfeed. "Kumi's breast was white and full, and I felt embarrassed no matter how many times I saw it"(ibid. 233). In Tsushima's story, the social gaze is interpolated by the narrator viewing the breast. And, as Kumi remarks, "they" are afraid of her because she is a woman.

Taking up Kristeva's notion of the abject, Barbara Creed's study of *The Monstrous Feminine* is applicable to interpretations of Kumi's sexuality. Definitions of the monstrous are grounded in notions of abjection "particularly as they relate to the following religious 'abominations': sexual immorality and perversion; corporeal alteration, decay and death; human sacrifice; murder; the corpse; bodily wastes; the feminine boy and incest"(15-16). Though not monstrous in an extreme, Kumi's body nonetheless is literally and metaphorically beyond borders and is thus a threat. Beyond the confines of her clothes and outside the walls of her home, her sex is ungovernable, and her corporeality almost perverse. Her femaleness is contested because she is not a proper mother who does home-

cooking as women should. However, even with the knowledge that society wants to bind her, the “monstrous” Kumi nevertheless *leaves* the room.

Deliberately engaging society as Kumi does in the narrative, Tsushima unwaveringly engages society and the reader by demanding recognition of marginalized individual experience. Tsushima’s female characters often “leave the room,” explicitly confront the patriarchal establishment and the world, and her readers, in turn, are made to recognize this real body of experience. Other critics also have observed that Tsushima’s women, “unlike those of Ôba and Takahashi [Takako, 1932—], do not remain in an enclosed inner world but try to cope with reality. For Tsushima this reality, though more dismal than that presented by her contemporaries, exists with undeniable weight and solidity”(Hanson and Tanaka, 226). Regarding Tsushima’s aims, the remark that Tsushima takes her characters out into the real world is accurate: describing Tsushima’s reality simply as “dismal,” however, is somewhat misleading. This cursory description does not attend to the remarkable challenge her texts implicitly pose to our social expectations, as well as to our knowledge of humanity and individual experience, and even to our ways of knowing the self demonstrated in *shishôsetsu* and literature.

Though the intimacy of self-revelation centers on the inner psychology, the sexual, and the corporeal body, by extrapolation of the self as difference in society Tsushima’s fiction also explores the female, gendered and sexual, body in society. In *Suifu (Undersea)*, the young woman/parent narrator reflects on her own mother’s struggle to raise her children alone, examining the social expectations and stifling institutions of motherhood and family from which her own single-parenthood also transgresses. In *Chased by the light of the night*, the police raid the protagonist’s house in search of clues implicating the mother in the boy’s sudden drowning. “They” represent the institutional raiding of the intimate space of the relation between parent and child, as well as the accusation of her social failure within the typical triangular configuration featuring husband/wife/children. In Tsushima’s prose fiction, the single mother is always suspect.

Moreover, the exposure that occurs with the police search in *Chased by the light of the night* is simultaneously the self-exposure of Tsushima for her literary audience that is made up of members of contemporary society who support these or similar institutions of authority. The speaker “confessing,” apparently, has nothing to hide. Most significantly, therefore, the performance of *shishôsetsu* understood through these examples is, rather than remaining a gesture of the individual author’s repressed, a conduit both for the expression of the self and for the readers to acknowledge *our* own repressed, *our* naturalized institutional values. This social recognition occurs because the author indirectly yet forcefully presents that which society and social laws repress.

The fatherless, fated families, and the dark tangles along the walls of Rikugien park in *The Silent Traders* thus also serve metaphorically for the author’s/protagonist’s penetrations into our shared, though often unacknowledged, experience of marginalization and social transgression. The fraught sexual relationship in *The Chrysanthemum Beetle*, as well as the tenuous mother-daughter relation of *Missing*, therefore are among Tsushima’s many texts that reflect this *shishôsetsu* author’s social self-consciousness. All are intimate portrayals of female figures and the body in relation to others, often at odds with “society” in unstable relations with men, with absent fathers, and in alternative liaisons. The individual narrator/protagonist in Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu oeuvre* is thus remarkable for her individualism, isolation, real rather than romanticized sexuality, and her transgression of social systems and boundaries.

To conclude through reconsideration of the discursive and corporeal “real” body in Tsushima’s narrative worlds, I argue that the “intimate” self-exposure of the body in her *shishôsetsu* is not only for personal relief, self-reflection, or masochistic self-indulgence. Tsushima’s *writing of the body* carries with it wider social implications, highlighting how, in different ways, the *shishôsetsu* individual has remained an important signifier in twentieth-century Japanese writing. In order to cement, finally, this concern for the social dimensions of *shishôsetsu*, Hijjiya-Kirschner’s argument for the opposite is worth

quoting. She states that *shishôsetsu* “can have no critical or emancipatory effect owing to its personally oriented nature and the emotional identification of the reader with the focus figure”(324). Also, *shishôsetsu* “does not challenge the reader to adopt a critical position nor to think further about the subject, since there is no room for thought when everything is concentrated on feeling”(324-25).

Clearly in opposition to the position that *shishôsetsu* has an extremely limited philosophical and social scope, the present study of *shishôsetsu* has demonstrated that a central relation of the genre is that of difference. This tension immediately structures the identity of the individual in relation to society, as has been demonstrated with Uno's, Tsushima's, and other examples of *writing of the body* in all previous sections. As a unique individual, the *shishôsetsu* self is of necessity structured within the social and forms of authority under which it operates, and it is this recognition that enables us to consider the wider social implications of writing of the self. As I have shown in Tsushima's writing in particular, it is also apparent how the narrative positioning of the self can carry with it both intellectual and emancipatory possibilities. In contrast to any position, therefore, that states that the genre hinges only on emotional identification versus the genre's broader social responsibilities and possibilities, I offer a study of Tsushima's writing that incontrovertibly positions her writing of figures at the margins of society as a challenge to ways in which we know and accept society. *Shishôsetsu* most generally allows and encourages readers to find individual identities discursively presented in fiction that somehow resemble their own selves and recognizable or familiar social conditions, and this may be considered an intellectual as well as an emotional identification of experience.

The generic limits Hijiya-Kirschnereit proposes above dangerously depoliticize *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*. In contrast to this critic's approach, I read Tsushima's *shishôsetsu*, as well as all other *shishôsetsu*, as inextricably engaged in a wider, social sphere, an engagement thoroughly demonstrated in the understanding of the discursive and corporeal identity of the subject presented here. As shown in the study of Tsushima's

shishôsetsu, moreover, the phenomenological approach to the body, that is, one of experience, is one that can incorporate the human and individual emotional, psychological, and imaginative experience in the ways in which we know the world. What Hijiya-Kirschnereit and other critics fail to realize is the radical epistemological alternative this method of knowing the world through the body poses for consideration of the *shishôsetsu* act, where the individual is structured *through its own* knowledge of power and repression and narrates his or her difference. This occurs through the demonstration of individual experience in, for example, the inchoate scream, rather than through “legitimately” articulated forms of institutionalized power and intelligible relationships most visible in the realist narrative typically and historically reified by *shishôsetsu* genre criticism.

The sort of traditional treatments of *shishôsetsu* as a narrow focus on the individual, such as described by Hijiya-Kirschnereit, are implicit in critical approaches to Tsushima’s *writing of the body* that do not recognize its political dimensions. Tsushima’s often female protagonists inevitably operate in particular ways under the restraints of patriarchal laws and authority, that is, against “the specific ways in which a legal and moral abstraction is made of the female body”(Orbaugh 124). As such, Tsushima could be considered a feminist author in her themes relating to the female body, woman, and emancipation. However, critics such as Monnet, for example, have taken a productive approach to Tsushima’s work also by “countering the prevailing critical view of Tsushima’s fiction as narrowly focused depictions of typically feminine experiences”¹³¹ and by understanding the explosive potential of the individual and its recognition in her texts.

To reiterate the essential point of departure in her fiction and in her philosophy, Tsushima does not only present particularized, and therefore isolated, experience. Feminist or not, her writing often treats women’s experience, but at the same time Tsushima’s

¹³¹ cf. Monnet, “*Connaissance délicate*, or the Science of Jealousy: Tsushima Yûko’s ‘The Chrysanthemum Beetle,’” in Schalow and Walker, 382-424.

unromanticized and transgressive female “I” challenges any reader to reconsider both the individual self and its experience in society. Whether or not Tsushima’s fictional portrayals of experience strictly correlate with actual events or her own personal experience, or even strictly “female” experience, her *shishôsetsu* achieve a socially emancipatory effect, not only for its *writing and reading* of the “female” character, but also of the *individual*. The sort of mutable, discursive construction of identity that Tsushima offers and, further, the craft of the *shishôsetsu* novel apparent in Tsushima’s “hyper-real” narrations, encourage critics and readers not only to explore the individual(s) of her *shishôsetsu*, but also to consider a wider definition of the genre *shishôsetsu* I develop in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Reconsidering *Shishôsetsu*

Re-Defining the Oxymoron “I-fiction”

The two previous chapters have studied Uno's and Tsushima's writing in terms of individual written identity, the subject in discourse, modes of presentation of the self, the reader's role in isolating autobiographical fiction, the *shishôsetsu* market, and the critical reception of the female subject. Not only have we seen ways in which the modern and contemporary subject narrates its subjectivity and experience. The literary texts read here attest also to the rich emotional and psychological experiences of these writers as well as to the critical significance of incorporating these selves further into *shishôsetsu* genre theory.

Together these aspects of both writing and reading subject identity for *shishôsetsu* suggest ways we can reconceive the genre I-novel in terms unlimited by those proscribed by traditional approaches to East/West comparative paradigms, realist/naturalist fiction, men's writing, and the ideas and ideologies of Japanese modernism. It is inarguable that *shishôsetsu* has been one of the dominant modes of writing in Japan in the twentieth century. Further, it is equally important and demonstrable that definitions of the genre have focused on the modern subject and the modern individual. However, definitions of *shishôsetsu* that would emphasize the specific, bounded, literary phenomenon of the Taishô individual, confession, and modernist modes of representation might be productively reconsidered in light of the more heuristic definition stated earlier, that is, *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*. As already demonstrated, *writing of the body* will encourage an understanding of the genre in terms of its functions rather than in (any of) its specific form(s).

Evident from the analyses of Uno's and Tsushima's writing, the application of the genre description *writing of the body* does not intend that either *shishôsetsu* or its subjects be treated ahistorically or anachronistically. This alternative focus on narratives of *the body* offers a praxis of critical understanding not only of use to our readings of individual Taishô male confession, but also toward readings of both modern and contemporary fictional disclosures of the female or male subject. The I-novelists' discursive subjects possess themselves an artistry and interest for the reader as a reflection of a self and a self in society. More germanely, however, Uno's and Tsushima's narrations of the individual body and its experience pose a particular challenge to traditional narrative and critical strategies, to methods of representation and knowledge of the "I," as well as to approaches and theories of autobiographical fiction. Chapter six will continue with an area of exploration my previous examination began, namely of genre definitions founded largely on the literary developments of the Taishô era and of the many ideologies at play in the formulation of certain genre definitions. In the present chapter, however, will be a study of genre definitions relating to the body. Deductive definitions formed of examples of primarily (almost exclusively) men's writing of the early modern Japanese subject, as well as realistic approaches to autobiography focusing on truthful representation and on a historically specific emergent "I," have been shown jointly to risk an inability to accomodate contemporary (and even historically earlier) narrations of personal experience, such as that presented in Tsushima's hyper-real fictional world, as well as other post-World War II *shishôsetsu*.

Indicating how definitions of *shishôsetsu* can change historically, at least one contemporary dictionary of Japanese culture, *Gendai bungei yôgo* (1994), incorporates in a definition what it describes unequivocally as increasingly fictional contemporary texts, redefining *shishôsetsu* in a broader fashion. Here there is a distinction made between present-day and pre-World War II authors and texts of the genre as follows:

Shishôsetsu, or the so-called first-person novel or *Ich-Roman*, is certainly not only a thing of Japan. However, when *shishôsetsu* is mentioned, modern Japanese literature is said to have developed its own original novelistic shape differing from existing concepts of those in Western European literary schools. More specifically, as a form featuring the writer's own self as protagonist, *shishôsetsu* was the pursuit of writing in a literary way about one's experience of aspects of daily life, and is said to have originated with Tayama Katai's *Futon* (1907, Meiji 40).

There was a time when it was the orthodoxy of *junbungaku* [serious or "pure" literature], and in the literary spirit, to portray Japanese civilization with the utmost severity in *shishôsetsu*. Vast changes post-World War II, however, found the *shishôsetsu* under a general attack that could be interpreted as a critical movement for the abolishment of *shishôsetsu*. What actually went into decline, though, was the critical movement itself, and, since then, *shishôsetsu* texts themselves did not remain in decline but rather have undergone an historical transfiguration and continue to flourish.

Shishôsetsu has gone from being a "copy of life that does not make up or twist one piece or one word," as expressed by Takii Kôzaku, author of *Mugen Hoyô* (*Infinite Embrace*) [and an early proponent of the genre], to a form that "does not simply depict an 'I' as it is without distorting anything. Even mixing fiction [into this depiction], the 'I' of *shishôsetsu* does not break down," as Fujieda Shizuo says of his own I-novel-like works. Writers like Shimao Toshio [1917-1986], Hayashi Kyoko [1930—], Takahashi Takako [1932—], Tsushima Yûko, and Ôe Kenzaburo [1935—], are thus contemporary *shishôsetsu* writers who "attempt to have their 'I' permeate history, society, and the realm of knowledge" as Kawanishi Masaaki states. Thus we can see that the new and, moreover, superior form of *shishôsetsu*

that breaks the restrictive bounds of traditional *shishôsetsu* still strongly shores up the contemporary world of the novel. (1128)¹³²

As the above definition suggests, after weathering the critical storm of the World War II era that had found the *shishôsetsu* to be self-indulgent in the extreme, the genre flourished as authors continued to explore the self while increasingly incorporating fiction into their autobiographical work. The present definition indicates, moreover, that the contents of *shishôsetsu* have changed with the contemporary interest in exploring history, society, and experience through the medium of the “I.” With respect to our genre studies, more importantly, is the suggestion that the *critical parameters* of *shishôsetsu* have or could undergo a structural change away from their former emphasis on literature of the Taishô era or on presenting life and self *ari no mama*, or “life as it is.” The above finds the diverse texts of the contemporary authors Shimao, Hayashi, Takahashi, Tsushima, and the Nobel Prize winner Ôe exemplary *shishôsetsu*, and indicates that such contemporary *shishôsetsu* authors as these blend both fabrication and historically accurate personal accounts of his/her life. Hijiya-Kirschnereit’s study also, in fact, reflects the broadening of criteria for consideration of contemporary *shishôsetsu*, to the point where she revises the number considered *shishôsetsu* themselves in subsequent versions of her thesis.¹³³

¹³² See Appendix Eight.

¹³³ Her original work in German (1981), translated first into Japanese (1992), contains a preface in the latest edition in English (1996) that states: “As a matter of fact, the whole study would certainly look quite different were I to write on *shishôsetsu* now.

Undoubtedly, much would have been rephrased or rearranged in the light of new findings”(1996: xiv). The English translation also includes a new chapter, “Recent Trends in *Shishôsetsu* Research, 1979-1988,” that looks at contemporary authors even while it

However, this blending of fact and fiction is not necessarily specific to contemporary *shishôsetsu*, particularly as opposed to modern works of the genre.¹³⁴ Fiction was most definitely a part of personal writing of the early part of the century as well, though this fictionality was not a critical nor a discursive generic focus. Shiga, whose *shishôsetsu* were used in illustration of the discursive self in the introduction, is celebrated as a master of the genre. In fact, however, *An'ya Koro* (*A Dark Night's Passing*), his greatest work,¹³⁵ often is considered *shishôsetsu* even though it is written in the third person and certainly is not an historically accurate recounting of his own individual experience, most patently obvious in his account of the protagonist's own death. I do not argue here whether or not *An'ya Koro* is *shishôsetsu*. Shiga's fictional realization of what is apparently his own experience or feelings serves to underline that the presence, at least, of certain quantities of fact or fiction is neither a desirable nor profitable method by which to distinguish contemporary from modern texts of the genre, as the above definition demonstrates.

What the above definition of *shishôsetsu* importantly suggests, however, is that there has been a *perceived* shift in the literary writing which

maintains, nonetheless, the original "horizon of expectations" she establishes for genre membership.

¹³⁴ Fowler has also remarked on this in a different way in his final chapter of *The Rhetoric of Confession*, where he states that "what marks this form as tradition-bound is not its thematic content, as is often suggested, but its mode of discourse"(297). This mode of discourse is the realist mode, but this insight is part of an investigation that Fowler ultimately does not extend beyond the novels themselves to the critical discourse surrounding the genre.

¹³⁵ Much of *An'ya Koro* was published in the 1920s, though the novel was published in its final form in 1937.

could lead to a definite shift in the general critical reception and interpretation of *shishôsetsu*. This would allow the genre to be comprised of contemporary texts that cannot necessarily be prescribed within the modern parameters of traditional realist/naturalist critical discourse. However, the generic challenge fiction raises would be most fully answered by a focus, again, not on the text's specific content, but rather on the function of *shishôsetsu* text and on its critical contexts of reception. The section below, through attention to the author and authority of the speaking subject of *shishôsetsu*, further interrogates the realist/mimeticist enterprise of traditional approaches to *shishôsetsu* in order to suggest alternative critical avenues by which to explore *writing of the body*.

The Body of the Author, Amen (Again)

In titling a section of his study of the late Meiji novel "Body of Author, Amen," Thomas Lamarre indicates both a frustration with, as well as the seeming inevitability of, dealing critically with what he calls the "hagiography"(11) of an author. This is, apparently, the critical tendency both in Japan and America to assume the centrality of authorial intention in approaches to literary texts. He says:

This interplay of authorial intentionality, hagiography, and commodification is a result of treating the author in terms of a physically-defined body which mediates all relationships. While it is common sense that an author has a corporeal

existence, it takes quite a leap to construe that corporeal existence as mediating everything single-handedly. Nevertheless, this commodified treatment of the author [here Lamarre discusses Sôseki] as an all-mediating body informs the bulk of criticism of his novels [Lamarre restricts the remark to Sôseki's novels], in Japan and America. (11)

Though the present discussion cannot adequately treat Lamarre's complex argument, his description of the critical commodification of the author's body, as well as an oft-demonstrated interest in assuming the narrative authority of the corporeal author, raises the issue of authorial intention in (personal) texts and the tendency of readers and critics to read back to this corporeal author. Obviously, this tendency has particular relevance for the genre of autobiographical fiction, *shishôsetsu*, because of its inherent dependence on an historical "author" body behind the narrative.

Barthes and Foucault, as mentioned, have described the "death of the author" in different ways, indicating a common, post-structuralist distrust toward reading for a specific individual behind a text and toward his/her authorial intention. The skepticism of their approach toward the Author and his/her imagined intention, however, would not seem to characterize the general popular and critical approaches to *shishôsetsu*. Rather than communicating any hesitancy toward reading for a specific, real, corporeal and historical individual, readers and critics generally have exhibited an interest and faith in isolating this corporeal body of the author, particularly for *shishôsetsu*. Addressing this issue of authority in the text, W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, describe the "intentional fallacy" (1946) as well as "affective fallacy" (1949) in terms of literary authority in ways applicable here. They explore the notion that since the "intentional fallacy" centres on the sincerity of the poet, and "affective fallacy" on the sincerity of the critic, authoritative readings risk a situation where the poem or text itself tends to disappear. According to these New Critics, the

danger or fallacy of undertaking such an approach to a text, namely one involving intent and affect, would ultimately result in a focus on the psychological state of the author and end up in biography, or, alternately, end up mistakenly focused on audience response. In either case, therefore, one risks ignoring the text.¹³⁶

With the political and gender issues at stake in the written and received body that is perhaps unique to the genre of *shishôsetsu*, however, I hesitate to consider the author abstractly, or in its narrowest sense as an author-function, as Foucault suggests. Via phenomenological criticism and reader response theory, an alternate avenue is visible, that is, an approach to a text featuring an “intentional” focus that will attempt not to ignore the text but, rather, will simultaneously incorporate the real body of the author presented and read. This approach would find that the author transforms his or her actual world into an imaginative text or fictive universe. This fictive universe, further, still involves the individual, corporeal body of *shishôsetsu* and real experience, and, through interaction with the reader’s interpretation, is in turn received through a sort of mutual referentiality by readers and critics who operate within the discourse of real life and other surrounding

¹³⁶ Lamarre also briefly discusses the intentional and affective fallacy. “In general, criticism which radically (and justifiably) departs with authorial intentions, hagiography, and New Critical objectivism has tended to ignore the problem of authority, under the mistaken notion that discussions of authority necessarily imply an intentional fallacy”(19). Lamarre importantly adds: “With this bias, a number of critics have proclaimed the ‘death of the author.’ However, it is important to recall that while this death of the author signals a departure from criticism which conflates a text with its author (or ‘origins’), this death of the author does not signal the death of all considerations of authority. Foucault, proclaiming the death of the author, also suggests that we begin to analyze works in terms of an ‘author-function,’ that is, in terms of how authority is constructed in textual and social contexts”(19).

media. On this point, for *shishôsetsu*, the discourse of other media must necessarily include biographical, thus “authoritative” in a sense —whether strictly “true” or not— information.

In such a way, the intentions of the author and reader will not be ignored when considering the performance of the individual subject and identity in the autobiographical text. On the other hand, this type of discursive approach also makes it possible to see, simultaneously, the fallibility of trying to isolate a reliable, single, historical narrator/author. Significantly, though, this type of approach to the author will yet maintain a belief in some form of *presence* of the author in the text. Narrative *authority*, in this case, will become at the same time neither a necessarily absolute nor a transcendent authority.

Fowler’s interest in the rhetoric of confession in a different way underscores writers’ and readers’ participation in determining the discursive referentiality of a *shishôsetsu* text and real life, though his project is ultimately engineered through a focus on the Taishô era subject of *shishôsetsu*. Conceiving of authorial presence and narrative authority in discursive, rather than authoritative, terms further allows the sense that neither authorial presence nor authority is definitive. However, as I have shown throughout this study of Uno’s and Tsushima’s life-works, the discussion of the discursive body performed in the I-text is not feasible without a concomitant investment in the corporeal body, in the body of experience, particularly seen as the self’s participation in the various social systems, political ideologies, and institutions which affect the real, gendered body represented. Uno’s mirror-writing, as shown, depends on and acknowledges her own commodified body: she exhibits a self-consciousness in her writing of her body which is not only produced for an audience, but becomes also a cumulative, mutable female subject produced by and through an audience. As the present study has also demonstrated, the fictive possibilities of *shishôsetsu* interrogated particularly in Tsushima’s texts often feature a body in a hyper-real fictive universe that can be read biographically, nevertheless, as the fictional accounts of a body of real liminal and marginal experience.

Describing the emergence and the uniqueness of the individual from among social institutions has remained the concern of *shishôsetsu*. Differing critical approaches to this narration, however, become apparent through the examination of ways in which the genre *shishôsetsu* has been historically read, as well as in the current desire to break with the traditional literary forms *shishôsetsu* is said to present, as illustrated by the 1994 definition. Regardless of whether *shishôsetsu* has persisted in contemporary Japanese writing in apparently more widely fictional forms, it is questionable whether the Realist/Naturalist terms with which the genre was originally implicitly conceived should continue to be used as a frame of reference through which to discuss autobiographical fiction. A reading of the ideologies formerly at play in a text's critical classification as *shishôsetsu* is called for, particularly toward dismantling the authority previously given to the author/subject of Taishô era authors and narrative by traditional approaches to the genre *shishôsetsu*. As stated in the opening chapters of the present study, all previous approaches to *shishôsetsu* do not conceive sufficiently of the "I" created discursively and exhibit a continuous return to a realist/mimeticist project. As *writing of the body*, the alternative framework I propose by which to write, read, and generically conceive *shishôsetsu*, the authorial body is simultaneously discursive and corporeal though not definitive.

However removed I wish to make *shishôsetsu* criticism from its previously strict focus on the unique political and historical circumstances of the Taishô (male) individual who inspired particular definitions, though, this frame through which to discuss *shishôsetsu* is not the "transcendental position" that Suzuki would like to realize for genre studies. It is, in contrast, a *secular* position. That is, it is a critical approach and genre definition that is grounded by the actual, real, physical and historical body. Further, the genre *writing of the body* would not be removed, in my re-definition, from the

interactive discourse of self and real experience *shishôsetsu* texts generate and are created from. In consideration of a self paramount to the genre, this alternative highlighting of the body of *shishôsetsu* will allow for experiencing the individual, physical, and gendered body as a representation of difference in the sense that it is unique from other bodies. It will allow also for identity to be mutable as well as for a non-authoritative author/subject to be discursively created and read.

Sex and Truth, Risk and Identity

This next section will couple the author/subject with a look at the codification of the sexual confession. Confession, as stated, was a large component of Taishô-era *shishôsetsu*, though the inducement to exhibit the self will be analyzed also in its forms present in both pre- and post-World War II texts of the genre, including texts authored by women. What will become apparent is that the practice itself of revealing oneself as difference, as a unique individual with particular emotional, psychological, and social experiences, came to be regulated by texts and genre criticism that isolated (male) sexual confession as a dominant mode of *shishôsetsu*. These particular modes of male confessional fiction became critically worthy of generic, and even moral, condemnation or approval and were taken, further, as a generic case of self-absorption exhibiting a general lack of social, critical, and philosophical interest. The present interrogation of this *form* (which we recall differs from the overarching interest of the present study in the *function* of the genre) will be

accomplished through readings of the latent body crucial to *shishôsetsu*, read specifically in individual narratives of love and sexuality.

Definitions of the I-novel have offered that it is a first- or third-person narration of the experiences of an author's own actual life. Still, as this study has shown, remaining sentiment behind critical approaches to *shishôsetsu* is that stories of the private individual will reveal the dark, sexual, human impulses of man, that would, in turn, act as a conduit to humanity and truth. In a way similar to Arima's insight mentioned in chapter two, Suzuki states that through the convincing medium of narrative objectivity, "Japanese Naturalism posited sexual desire as a hidden or suppressed force, whose disclosure in the novel could lead directly to the revelation of the truth of human nature. This focus on sexual desire as the origin of the truth of human nature was disseminated by the Naturalist movement and formed the basic premise of the modern Japanese novel"(165).¹³⁷ This relation of sex and truth has further been designated by some critics as an "origin" in a genealogy of Japanese literature, tracing, as it were, the emergence of the modern subject in Japanese literature through the most intimate revelations of self.¹³⁸ Though contentious, regardless of whether one interprets sexual desire and truth as a "premise" of the modern Japanese

¹³⁷ As mentioned in chapter one, many critics have stated that Japanese Naturalism differed from European Naturalism (cf. Fowler; Kobayashi). It has been stated also that considering "human nature," where European naturalism explored heredity, determinism, and science, Japanese literature focused on sex and the author's interior life (Suzuki 87-92).

¹³⁸ Though Karatani would not use the term "origin," he yet describes *Futon*, as mentioned in an earlier section here, as the first one to write of sexuality (79). In the final chapter here, "'Literature of the Lost Home': Leaving the Nest," I will further discuss the problem of the notion of genealogy and its implied trajectory of Japanese modernism as it relates to theory of the *shishôsetsu*.

novel, clearly the subject who is a vehicle of this desire and experience is of great significance to both notions of identity and ideas of genres of Japanese literature.

A reading of sex and love in *shishôsetsu* will demonstrate the generic preoccupation with male confessional literature of self and romantic love. Suzuki has described the intimate confession and its growing popularity:

In contrast to the Western notion of love, which was thought essential for the “modern individual” yet seemed to remain a mirage in Japan, the notion of dark, ugly sexual reality was probably more readily accepted as natural, immediate, and universal reality inherent in everybody. Following the sensational reception of *Futon*, many writers began to describe their own sexual life in relationship to a yearning for love, disillusionment in marriage, and domestic, family life. The increased focus on women of the demimonde as the subject of the *shôsetsu* and the reevaluation of Tokugawa “pleasure literature” in subsequent years were no doubt also related to the Naturalist belief in the essential relationship between sexuality and truth. (88)

The sort of confession coupled with physicality and the domestic is present in many *shishôsetsu*. Among numerous examples underlying the present genre study are: Katai’s *Futon*, Dazai’s narratives of his lovers, numerous love-suicide attempts, and wife in *Yamashina no kiroku* (*A Memory of Yamashina*, 1925) and *Mesu ni tsuite* (*Female*, 1936) among many others; Shiga’s personal narratives of sexual, marital, and familial relations beginning with *Ôtsu Junkichi* (*Ôtsu Junkichi*, 1912) and *Wakai* (*Reconciliation*, 1917), and extending to his more fictional *An’ya kôro* (*A Dark Night’s Passing*, 1937); as well as many (though less “confessional” than earlier texts) works in contemporary Japanese writing.

The narrated *body* of *shishôsetsu* —that is, one of ordinary, common experience—, of the sexual as well as gendered body, is one of the most titillating and pivotal characteristics that the intimate and iconoclastic *shishôsetsu* text can be seen to have historicly excited and exploited for decades. Differing narrations of sex and truth, however, can be traced to the liberalism of an early text such as Katai's *Futon* all the way through to Uno's, through women's, and to many later contemporary autobiographical writings. As such, *shishôsetsu* arguably can be seen to have highlighted, and continue to highlight, the individual body against modern institutions and authority. But do we have to consider the genre *shishôsetsu*, and the narrated difference of the self, confession?

Before continuing with an analysis of sex and truth in *shishôsetsu*, so that the accounting of personal difference can be conceived in ways other than confession, it is helpful to look briefly at Suzuki's study of irony in "Love, Sexuality, and Nature: Tayama Katai's 'Quilt' and Japanese Naturalism." She discusses, among other examples, the last sentence of the novel, where "tears fell in torrents down Tokio's whiskered face." Here,

the highly formal adverb *ôzen* [in torrents] is unexpectedly combined, in a manner reminiscent of *haikai*, with a vulgar, unpoetic word *higazura* [whiskered face], thereby making ironical, if not entirely comical, Tokio's sentimental self-pity. The narrative voice of *Futon* thus reveals Tokio's blindness, the gap between his narrow perception of the world (and of himself) and those events that occur around him (and in himself) of which he remains unaware. (72)

Suzuki insightfully reads Katai's portrayal of the self-conscious, even self-consciously "literary," erotic yearning of the un-indulged protagonist as ironic, rather than simply as an objectified presentation of a self. Through its own irony, therefore, *Futon* is a juxtaposition of incongruities, specifically made between the supposedly "objective" narration of Tokio's thoughts within the Naturalist tradition, and the omniscient narrator's presence in the story

that treats Tokio's infatuation and blindness humorously.¹³⁹ Of particular importance to the present genre study is that, as Suzuki also notes, the "interest of *Futon* lies not only in the ironic and critical perspectives that the text develops *vis-à-vis* the protagonist but also in the historical process by which this critical distance was eventually erased"(70).

That is, the critical distance between narrator and protagonist "eventually erased" in historical approaches to *shishôsetsu* is apparent in the rhetorical objectivity assumed of the narrating voice. As related to this Naturalist interest in confession as point of access to truth, moreover, this erasure is present in the continued congruency it makes possible between narrator=protagonist. An ironic stance of the narrator thus would expressly problematize this equation. However, even if we see Katai's text as therefore inappropriately taken up as an emblem of *shishôsetsu*, because it has now "failed" in the undistanced narrator/protagonist relationship, nonetheless we are led to recognize *the desire* on the part of the writer and literary market, evidently, for such a "personal" exposure, and for the intimate disclosure. In a sense, then, the equation of protagonist and narrator basically is upheld by surrounding discourse. That is, what is even more striking is the narrated and real relation of difference that is upheld, of the presentation and reading of the unique individual.

What is significant, moreover, is how Katai indirectly acknowledges his own commodification, that is, through his own knowledge of himself or "Tokio" as an object of derision, and his self-conscious exposure as the failed romantic hero. Similar to the commodity made of the self-reflexive subject in Uno's texts, here again we also see the author's knowledge of the role of readership and surrounding discourse erasing the distance between narrator and protagonist in *Futon*. The narrator's position as commenting on his (other) written self further obviates this relation because he is self-consciously

¹³⁹ This general notion of irony is not necessarily related to, for example, the more specific notion of romantic irony developed in the late-eighteenth century.

“literary.” Namely, like the operation I described in Uno’s *shishôsetsu*, the knowledge expressed in Katai’s text of what constitutes modern love, romance, and the relations between men and women is a complex one that also has its roots also in part in the author’s *literary* imagination. While demonstrating their recurrent re-*production* of the intimate experience, the narrators of both Katai’s and Uno’s texts acknowledge their production of a subject, who is further, importantly, a desiring subject produced in the context of romantic love, and for a desiring public, whether or not this desire has been yet realized. In this light, considering the irony resulting in the separation of narrator and protagonist together with relations of difference, literary sexual confession can always be seen to be self-conscious as well as audience-conscious because it is the private made public. Thus, read in terms of the relation between sex and “truth,” *shishôsetsu* may be, therefore, always ironic, in any form, or at least consistently concerned with the juxtapositioning of falsehood and truth, the divisions between narration of surface (social) appearance and underlying (personal) reality.

To return to the narrations of love and sex, this self-conscious yet public exploration of one’s self is a personal equivalent of what the Taishô public was currently undergoing in its own investigation of Christianity, confession, *ren’ai* and romantic love. Though ambivalent at times, personal liberation was often entwined with the notion of Romantic love. *Ren’ai* or romantic, “enlightened” love was thematized through portrayals of the author’s emotional life, the possibilities of desire, and the elusive quest for individual experience or fulfillment. Romantic love was the investigation of spirituality and ways of living, and was seen as a liberating alternative of the early twentieth-century individual, as well as a form of personal protest against the strictures of the Confucian, feudal *ie* or family/inheritance systems that demanded familial, social, and public allegiances of the individual. It is small wonder, then, that the sexual confession became a compelling national generic form, interested as it is in exploring identity. Further, as I have shown in Katai’s and Uno’s texts, the Romantic notion of love male authors depicted was

one dominated by notions of “Woman,” a figure who was in turn tied to notions of the writers’ own personal and modern progress, of youth, and of the West. The collective interest in equating Tokio and Katai in *Futon* is thus also an exploration of the readers’ own curiosity, the exploration of their own narcissistic/masochistic individual desire, as well as a social indulgence and condemnation of love pursuits. The narrative voice of *Futon* that reveals “the gap between [Tokio’s] narrow perception of the world (and of himself) and those events that occur around him”(Suzuki 72), therefore at the same time reveals the knowledge of its own commodification of the individual set out as a vehicle of “real” experience for the repressed, self-censored author (and the implied reader, as well as society) who undermine him. Furthermore, Katai enacts, through the derisive speaker undermining the protagonist’s tragic end, his own self-censorship, in a sense preempting that which he anticipates on the part of society or his readership.

Reconsidering sexual disclosure as related to truth, even if Katai’s protagonist or anti-hero Tokio is read as a comic figure, and the narrative undermines “the blind acceptance of Western literary ideals, particularly the notion of romantic love and the impossibility of its realization in Japanese society”(Suzuki 88), the narrative nevertheless upholds the interest placed on romantic, heterosexual love as a way to individual emancipation, as well as the value of individual experience. Thus the ideal of romantic love pursued in the text is the enactment, if not the realization, of confession or transgression that is liberation. To recall Karatani’s observation, Katai’s *Futon* created a sensation because it wrote of “the sexuality brought into existence by repression”(79). If the text therefore operates as an investigation of sexual liberation and individual emancipation, even as masochistic performance, the systems of authority under which the individual operates are shaken regardless of ironic readings in *Futon*.

On these mechanics of power and the individual, through Foucault and Nietzsche Karatani remarks that the confession of *shishôsetsu* can be seen as “a manifestation in twisted form of a will to power. Confession does not necessarily imply remorse. Behind a

facade of weakness, the one who confesses seeks to become master, to dominate”(86). That is, through describing his transgression, the offender of *shishôsetsu* also achieves a certain status in opposition to external authority. By making oneself the abject, the confessor assumes a political position outside but challenging the boundaries of society, of acceptance: confessing his sins the *shishôsetsu* author re-positions himself *vis a vis* the power relationship, showing a will to display or master his own body and desires. In any case, the even laughable confession is yet a confession of difference, underscoring, as it does, the *relations* of power and individual difference, specifically those dually present in the structure of an uncompromising society and the individual abjectly squaring off against it. Yet there is no need to consider either *shishôsetsu* or the relation of difference only in terms of confession, as becomes apparent.

Considering these *relations* of difference, Katai can be seen to break with former literary convention by presenting a fallible, sexual individual. He is unlike previous literary heroes for his liberation as well as for the private narration of his “most contemptible actions [and] shameful thoughts,” his “secret sins,” and his “dissolute or deviant”(Keene 506-13) life. The modern-yet-romantic, traditional teacher/fool Tokio, likeable or not, drunk or sober, is an embodiment of uniqueness against the conformity of the social fabric. As such, therefore, because *shishôsetsu* features the relation of difference, it is fruitful to analyze the structuring of oppositions within the *shishôsetsu* text rather than a specific, historical truth readings of the confessional form may otherwise aim to realize.

In this alternate way, as described in part in the earlier section *Daring Difference*, individual difference may be both written and read as the relation of personal risk and the social revelation of the individual body. As identity is discursive, a certain amount of play with the author’s own uniqueness, particularly that to do with his actual or fictional experience, is also a possibility through divergent interpretations of his or her own confessional act. Regarding the relation of difference, though, the revelation of the intimate life, overtly ironic or not, thus also self-consciously and overtly rhetorical/literary or not,

nevertheless is naturalized as a treatment of personal difference and real experience, and thus some sort of truth. The erasure of separation between protagonist and narrator and author that Suzuki demonstrates occurs in the historical process of Japanese Naturalism thus can be read of *shishôsetsu* reception generally. Further, what Foucault realizes in *The History of Sexuality* is applicable, moreover, to confession in the sense that confession became codified in *shishôsetsu* and genre criticism. That is, the discourse of truth as related to the ritual of sex and confession became *generically* regulated. Specifically, personal confession became “medicalized,” in a sense, by genre codification, by literature’s institutions that intend(ed) to find the confession of sex as an access to truth as well as a signifier of genre categorization. Featuring the relation of difference of the self in its myriad forms, however, the genre study here alternately finds the Taishô-era confession but a manifestation of the relation of difference that *shishôsetsu* consistently and historically performs.

The disillusionment in marriage featured by *shishôsetsu* Suzuki finds above, that is apparent in men’s writing of domestic situations and fetishized through “women of the demimonde,” is a type of sexual confession that can be seen to present a male version of a will to self-realization in the arena of romantic love. These writings, significantly, also feature the emancipated male via their constructions of a female partner, who is “Woman.” Rather than a fully emancipated, individuated female individual or partner, though, male authors often feature female characters in circumscribed relation to their own emancipation and enlightenment, and as accomplices to their own idealization of love. Other critics have remarked also that modern and contemporary Japanese fiction has been dominated by “men’s ‘love stories’ written over the last hundred years [which are] thoroughly tainted by a male-chauvinist notion of ‘romantic love’”(Segusa Kazuko, in Ueno 19). In contrast, as mentioned earlier in a discussion of Uno’s *shishôsetsu*, her writing, as well as that by other women, articulates this experience *from* “the demimonde,” so to speak, namely the (marginal, subversive) woman’s point of view.

To briefly restate, early women's writings of love and the relationship between the sexes appeared simultaneously with confessional men's *shishôsetsu*, though the latter formed the canon of serious literature or *jun bungaku*. These women's writings include Hayashi's unconventional, itinerant liaisons in *Hôrôki*; Tamura Toshiko's *Ikichi* (*Life Blood*, 1911) and *Seigon* (*The Vow*, 1913); Hiratsuka's notes on love, marriage and her publicly discussed love affair with a woman in the 1910s; Ôba's female *bildungsroman*; and Uno's protagonists' independence, multiple marriages, and unsatisfying search for partners. Later examples include Tsushima's narrated sexuality and single-parenthood; Yamada Eimi's (1959—) relationships with black (*kokujin*) partners and stories of sadism and masochism, as well as others too numerous to list. They are among so many other authors who do not subscribe to historically entrenched patriarchal notions of the "good wife, wise mother" and to masculinized, romantic notions of love and Woman. Whatever specific form love takes, though, both male and female authors of the genre reflect how *shishôsetsu* functions as *writing of the body* featuring the relation of difference. At the same time, moreover, women's autobiographical writing can be seen to negotiate the incontrovertible corporeal experience of sexual, gendered bodies when their bodies are perceived differently than those of the dominant, namely that of male experience and the male body.

Bringing gender to the present discussion of *shishôsetsu*, sex, and love, the hidden or suppressed force embodied and activated by the figure *new woman/modern girl*, as demonstrated, is ignored by genre studies. The question I have asked throughout analyses of Uno's and Tsushima's writing remains: Why is the sexual woman ignored? Sexual or corporeal intimacy of *shishôsetsu*, though a prominent form of *shishôsetsu* and a favored form of genre criticism, became unsettling, ambivalent, or at once too iconoclastic or too trivial, when embodied by the female characters presented in women's *shishôsetsu*. These emboldened individuals went beyond the imaginative boundaries not only of romantic love, but also of the patriarchal family system and traditional society. They were neither

aesthetic nor sensual objects, but corporeal and real women, and, as seen in the study of Uno's and Tsushima's reception, are considered deviant and dangerous as well as boring and insignificant.

As discussed in chapter three, Uno's *new woman/modern girl* protagonists are active voices of female and individual experience narrated by depictions of female lives in the intimacy of sexual, familial, and non-traditional, though domestic, relations. Significantly, however, Uno's "yearning for love" is not presented ironically in literary terms nor through narrative distancing as one may read in *Futon*. Her texts may be considered ironic, rather, in the sense of the self-conscious speaker or narrator who recognizes her *body* of writing will be watched. Looking within her *oeuvre*, one common trope Uno refers to as a personal demonstration of intimacy is that of the bedding, bloodied from her lover's failed double suicide with another woman, that she (quite happily) finds the morning after sex with him.¹⁴⁰ The story is recounted over again in *Watakushi no bungakuteki kaisôki* (*My literary memoirs*, 1971) as follows:

The next morning when I awoke I noticed what apparently I had missed the night before. The bedding we had used was spattered with blood stains. When I saw it I did not say, "My god! Isn't this blood?" Nor did I say, "Is this the blood from *that* night?" Had I been a proper woman I would have fled in terror at the sight. But to the contrary, I felt all the more inclined to remain right where I was. (trans.

Copeland 43)¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ The story is also told in the narrative *Iro zange*, among others mentioned, to which Uno later returns and rewrites in *Watakushi no bungakuteki kaisôki*.

¹⁴¹ Note the deliberate authorial play with notions of truth and representation in the oxymoron of the title of another of Uno's fictional/autobiographical works, "My *Literary Memoirs*" (emph. mine).

Though the suicide attempt Uno describes above indicates an aestheticized notion of “love,” there is no distance here between the speaker/narrator censoring the protagonist’s actions in a manner similar to that which Katai’s narrator of *Futon* illustrates. Nonetheless, Uno is no less aware of the love relationships written of in novels, or of the notion of Western “enlightened” love between individuals and its influence in Japan. She is also aware that she is writing a love story that will be received within this literary milieu. This knowledge of literary love is demonstrated, for example, in her short story *Genius of Imitation*, as previously cited. In her *shishôsetsu*, it may be seen how Uno self-consciously offers readers and critics her female body of sexual and romantic experience. Unself-consciously, or rather, without self-censorship, however, Uno makes these romantic stories of love into her own.

The physical evidence of the former lovers the Uno character faces in the passage contains a sense of both intimacy and discovery that is thoroughly narrated, with no apparent distance between narrative voice and narrative perspective, thus paralleling the action of the *shishôsetsu* as unmediated discovery baring all. The link between sex and truth is obviated by her discursive presentation of a discovering eye or “I” disclosing all physical details of the bed and thus her relationship. Here is the presentation of an individual life *as if* real. Seen through the detail of a microscope under the author’s “objective” scrutiny of herself, Uno then passes the glass off to the reader, even if, by now, the reader knows the examination is multiply filtered in the portrayal itself, its re-writings, and by the author’s self-consciousness.

This personal disclosure which posits *female* sexual desire as a hidden or suppressed force would not be understood sufficiently in a simple confessional framework, not only because this is the presentation of historically unacknowledged female sexuality. Uno’s “love-foolery” could alternately be considered a performed transgression in the interest of the individual liberating experience through the narrative *shishôsetsu*,

particularly through sexual self-disclosure. *Shishôsetsu* thus generally could be more fruitfully understood as an act of real (even masochistic) risk or theatrical daring that highlights the relation of difference and the performance of unique identity rather than as confession.

Uno's *shishôsetsu* texts, furthermore, can be seen to demonstrate risk in a personal as well as the social sphere, though understandings of confession are often limited to the former. This notion of risk, apparent also in Tsushima's writing, would emphasize the interaction of the *shishôsetsu* text between author and reader in the social, discursive context, rather than isolate the product, that is the "confession," of the exchange. In addition, risk conceived in this arena of its reception underlines the importance of acknowledging how *shishôsetsu* functions between writer and reader as *writing of the body*. For her part, Tsushima's personal narratives are often glimpses into the homes of her female protagonists and into the lives of single mothers. In these intimate narrations and settings, the reader is often positioned as "society" peering at the windows, just as her protagonists peer out, or risk going out physically, as Kumi does in the short story *A Bed of Grass*. The social nature of the private act of *shishôsetsu* can be seen to involve the transgression of the individual in our many institutions, be they political, social, or literary.

As explored, the business of personal disclosure in the case of *Chased by the light of the night*, for example, relates to two intimate bodies, Tsushima's and the Heian author's. Both bodies are written into the theatre of the public eye, and both are "risking" texts. The former Heian text is the account of a (real) woman's illicit, fated, even disastrous love for, and children by, a man with whom she is not allowed to maintain relations, nor he with her, and the suffering she cannot escape as a result. Part of the tension generated in Tsushima's text *Chased by the Light of the Night*, as I have shown, lies far beyond the equation of loss Tsushima makes between the death of her son and her re-telling of *Yowa no nezame* however. The contemporary narrator's re-telling of personal experience implicitly acknowledges the possibility that some (society) may consider the

present mother was actually negligent in her son's death. The risk expands because the narrative reveals that the intimate physical bond "normally" present between mother and child is broken. Risk is further underlined by the parent's intimate description of her physical loss of a child and of the psychical torment to herself.

Social condemnation or acceptance is a risk not only apparent in the communicative act of the Heian woman's text and how it will be received, but also overtly played out in Tsushima's narrative of *Chased by the light of the night*. In this latter text, the speaker is continually conscious that the intimate letters she "writes" to the dead Heian author about her son's death will be "surreptitiously" read by her present audience. The daring of personal revelation on the part of the present-day narrator is further underlined when the author feels compelled to insist to police and to the hospital authorities, rationalizing both to herself (perhaps) and to the reader, that the death was an accident, that she had only left her son in the bathtub for a few moments, and that he loved the water. Tsushima's self-exposure to social condemnation or vulnerability also bares the personal physical space of the distraught mother. That is, the personal body of the mother is violated by the social/legal/penal institutions' affect on her, personified first by the unsympathetic hospital staff who refuse to allow her to lie with the body of her son. Later the raiding police body personifies the social body when, dazed by her son's sudden death, the narrator finds her house visited by a raiding swarm of police who search for any indication that her son died under suspicious circumstances or as a result of malevolent negligence on her part. The tension of difference between self and society again becomes apparent, and is felt even more acutely as the reader becomes conscious of being part of society and her viewers. The transgressive individual body who tells the story now is at the mercy of—or at least exists in relation to— social and political institutions, and re-risks her self in the telling.

Tsushima's other autobiographical fictions, often peopled with single, divorced mothers, are also a realization of the performance of the individual subject in opposition to

normative society. Here, the (perhaps also in part masochistic) impulse to portray one's experience or "failures" is not limited, necessarily, to the self-indulgence one may read of Taishô confession, though it may relate to gender and sex. As both early twentieth-century confession and texts such as Tsushima's alike may be considered *shishôsetsu*, what is called for is an understanding the genre in terms of the risk of narrating individual difference. How the disclosure operates within society must be accounted for, as well as how the *shishôsetsu* text may not be only self-indulgent but also may serve a social purpose.

The focus on individual experience accessible through sexual and intimate disclosure is often a trope of *shishôsetsu* said to feature the more or less "faithful" representation of the unique experiences of the author. As I have demonstrated, however, in the performance of the individual, the author *risks* in the telling of his or her personal, actual experience. Focusing on the function, again, rather than on the form, this narration of difference is made possible, and, to the reader, interesting, by the presence of literary, political, and social taboos and expectations of the individual in society, such as those faced by the single, divorced woman, that the reader also has knowledge of through his or her own (historically similar or not) experience. In both Uno's and Tsushima's texts featuring liberated, sexual, and independent (female) individuals, social taboos and codes are even explicitly acknowledged. When Uno states, for example, in the bedroom passage above, that "a proper woman would have fled in terror"(trans. Copeland, 43), the narration of the protagonist's (Uno's) choice to remain in the bloodied bed of lovers becomes a realization of the liberated individual. We recognize how individual experience is narrated within the context of society, reinforcing acknowledgement of the behavior of a "proper" woman, and, ultimately, we witness Uno's, as well as Tsushima's, transgressive narrated refusal of these social codes.

I suggest that the reader and writer of *shishôsetsu* engages with Uno's, Tsushima's, and other writing as *autobiographical* fiction because of the following possibilities. Firstly,

that the author will divulge a “personal” secret, which is a risk because the narration defies expectations and social codes as a demonstration of historically real uniqueness. And secondly, that there may be some sort of “risky recognition” on the part of the reader regarding the possibility of communion with an author’s experience which she/he shares or knows, or, at least, acknowledges that the possibility exists in society. This relationship of risk occurring in the production/reception of the text exists even if the *author*’s risk is lessened through fictionalizing personal experience and the *reader*’s risk is minimized by the identification’s vicarious nature. I use the words “personal” and “risky recognition” in quotations because these are two *positions* that the producer and the receiver take up in the *shishôsetsu* act. Furthermore, in this narrated relation of difference, individual identity is not necessarily nor absolutely historically actual but rather is *performed* in the *shishôsetsu* act. That is, both the author’s identity and society are positions that are constructed in part by the action of writing and reading of the individual body, and may not necessarily correspond wholly to actual fact, person, or identity, though depend on a body. While *shishôsetsu*’s society and the “I” are discursively created in the communication system established by the *shishôsetsu*, nonetheless this discursivity does not mean that the impact, importance, or “reality” of intimate personal revelation as it relates to “truth” is weakened. Nor does this notion of discursivity negate the affect of positions taken up by either the writer or the reader entering into autobiographical fiction. Because the *relation* between reality and truth, that was formerly transparent in mimeticist or realist readings of autobiographical fiction, now is made opaque does not mean that there is no longer a communicative act of production and reception that deals with the personal as if the person “exists.”

In this way, therefore, it is clear how the relation between “sex” and “truth” established by Naturalism and confession, and the *shishôsetsu* subject noted by critics such as Suzuki earlier, may be displaced by the relation possible between portrayals of the discursive and corporeal body and difference as performed identity. Replacing the

Naturalist realist relation of “sex” and “truth” with the discursive relation “body” and “identity” underscores not only the presence of the intimate and sexual body. This re-interpretation of *shishôsetsu*’s forms is related also to the gendered, the physical, the discursive, and the individual/personal body, and its integral role in producing *shishôsetsu* in both early and contemporary literary examples of the genre. As opposed to “sex” and “truth,” “body” and “identity” is a relation, moreover, that explores the unique individual in relation not only to him/herself but also to human nature, that is, to society. *Shishôsetsu* depends precisely on this tension between real personal and public risk and revelation rather than remaining the product of an exposure of the unique individual in isolation.¹⁴²

Here, then, are tied the notions of discourse and the social realm and the *shishôsetsu* focus on the “body.” The *body* integral to *shishôsetsu* is that of the individual that is produced and received discursively, performed as difference in the literature itself and through surrounding media. The extension of this personal performance of identity into the public realm and, ultimately, into genre criticism is significant. Generic evaluation, as we have seen, implicitly has equated men’s “confession” or revelation of sexual experience as “truth” about the individual and the human condition via the medium of *shishôsetsu*. Women’s personal I-writing was often treated simply as writing of “sex” or “gender.” The equation, to reiterate, of *male writers* = *individual self* = *I-novel* as opposed to *female writers* = (*women’s*) *experience* = *women’s writing*, is evident not only in pejorative evaluations of Uno’s, Tsushima’s, and women’s writing in terms of the actual

¹⁴² The highlighting of the body as a type of resistance to Japanese institutions can also be read in *ero guro nansensu*, the “erotic, grotesque nonsense” publications that proliferated during the late Edo and Taishô period. These flourished alongside the later culture of the “modern girl” and “modern boy,” or *moga* and *mobo* respectively, who figure in early novels and *shishôsetsu* and were both the product and figures of the new working class and a new economic and social structure.

author behind it. The limited generic equations above also exist in opposition to forms of experience and knowing of interest here, and that could be acknowledged by genre criticism in ways that would not isolate only realist, positivist modes of knowledge.

In contrast, *shinpen no koto* and *mi no mawari*, as alternative approaches to *shishôsetsu*, address writing of the individual and gendered body as a unique body existing as difference in relation to social institutions. This genre description *writing of the body* also advances the potential of narratives of the real body to be considered as explorations of the human condition, thereby displacing the notion of positivist “truth” with “identity.” *Writing of the body* is the subversive discourse of the individual who is both a member of the state and an authored body written and read against the many kinds of social systems and institutionalized authority within which it exists. A focus on the individual *body*, that defines itself with respect to god, state, or other selves,¹⁴³ must be made integral in considerations of autobiographical fiction. The focus on the *body* of *shishôsetsu* in Japan also more fully engages with the political, economic, gender, and social strategies at work not only in writing of individual experience but also in its general and critical reception. As will be apparent in the final chapter here, re-evaluating critical studies, of both Taishô-era *shishôsetsu* as well as those produced in the last two decades, in terms of the *body* more clearly politicizes the voice of “I-writing” as writing and reading of the individual in the discursive, changing context of society.

Finally, in order to examine the way *shishôsetsu* functions in society, I turn now to genre studies of *shishôsetsu* reception. Without promoting a spurious psychoanalysis of the

¹⁴³ In Western literature, many autobiographical examples are found of the individual defining him/herself either in relation to God—as in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*—, to the state—as in Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz*—, and to a like-minded group—as in Hervé Guibert’s AIDS narrative of self, *A l’ami qui ne m’a pas sauvé la vie*—, among so many others.

reader's response to *shishôsetsu*, in *Chased by the light of the night*, for example, the reader's empathy almost inevitably extends from Tsushima's shocking personal discourse to considerations such as "How horrifying," "Can you imagine if...?" or, perhaps, "I heard about this woman who...." Hijiya-Kirschner also remarks this "emotional identification of the reader with the focus figure" (324) in her study of *shishôsetsu*. These sort of empathetic responses to intimate personal narrative are not unusual to a genre that demands recognition of its individual for his/her unique experience in society. It is a recognition of individual experience and difference also in its most general, existential sense that may be perceived transhistorically, transgenderly, and transculturally. As I have shown in the evaluation of both Uno and Tsushima, in a more extreme form the empathetic reader's response may even extend to criticism of the actual author him or herself based on the "decrepit" morality, "dark" subjects, or "base" actions of their self-serving autobiographical protagonists.

As for society, Uno's writings, particularly those featuring the *atarashii onna* and *moga*, are often explorations of *ren'ai* and the possibilities of the female individual in modern Japanese society. Looking closer at *shishôsetsu*'s social function, her *oeuvre* is remarkable for her attempt to explore modern and contemporary individual life and liberation through notions of love. Uno's depiction of her own (female) desire in many of her *shishôsetsu* texts is a declaration of female independence against social convention as well as a refusal of codes governing gender behavior. Tsushima's *shishôsetsu*, for their part, are not only explorations of individual experience, but are also presentations of marginalized and isolated female characters challenging the roles available to contemporary women, and even the behavior and experience of individuals, in Japanese society. Both authors offer narratives of personal and sexual experience that must be read as generated within the context of the social, particularly as a means of accessing and narrating contemporary universal reality and truth, and, moreover, not only those truths experienced by certain individuals or women. Even Katai/Tokio's intimate body of

thwarted, sexual love is additionally inscribed by his position in society as teacher, married man, writer, and late-Meiji Japanese intellectual. All are positions of authority, yet in the course of narration, all ultimately leave him inadequate to youthful, refined, and educated Yoshiko, “modern” (Western) society, and eventually even himself. All usurp his authority, and all ideals are fetishized and lost in this masochistic performance of suffering. The text and the protagonist reflect the attempted emancipation of the individual and may even be read as a metaphor for the psychological breakdown of late-Meiji society served through the portrayal of failed sexual, personal intimacy and thwarted love.

As apparent in *shishôsetsu*, the author and reader/critic are both given positions within the narrative of social discourse. They are complicit as active participants in the renderings and readings of individual human, political, intellectual, physical, and emotional experience in *shishôsetsu*. A study of the body of *shishôsetsu* emerging as a relation of difference, in addition, shows how individual voices presented are not necessarily indicative of the individual versus society, but of the individual *in* society. The “I” of *shishôsetsu* thus is always socially and politically engaged, despite the genre’s so-called “narrow” focus. Whether telling life “as it is” *aru no mama*, or containing more fictional personal narratives of love, divorce, success, birth, or death, *shishôsetsu* inhabits the position that the protagonist is unique and worth narrating. The performed author/protagonist figure is both a private and a public individual, at once an individuated self, but also a body present in, party to, and produced by socio-historic conditions and discourse.

With the above, the limitations of Hijiya-Kirshnereit’s claim that *shishôsetsu* is “predominantly an emotional work” with “no critical or emancipatory effect owing to its personally oriented nature and the emotional identification of the reader with the focus figure”(324-25) become clearer. Hijiya-Kirshnereit would deny, as mentioned during the discussion of Tsushima’s texts, that *shishôsetsu* may “challenge the reader to adopt a critical position or to think further about the subject, since there is no room for thought

when everything is concentrated on feeling”(324-25). Though an emotional component is apparent in the production of *shishôsetsu*’s narrative intimacy, and though the reader may identify with the individual presented, *shishôsetsu* most certainly can be seen to encourage critical thought. Though concentrated on the author’s individual experience, the relation of difference that *shishôsetsu* underscores is played out on a social field and thus expands beyond the intimate, self-indulgent, or self-serving because one reads the narrated individual as both part of society and its exception. Moreover, the claim that *shishôsetsu* has limited scope carries with it the implication of a particular kind of *shishôsetsu* at its heart, and I have already demonstrated the fallibility of associating *shishôsetsu* only with its traditional, confessional forms.

A case in point is Tsushima’s personal *oeuvre* that challenges ontological forms of knowledge by representing individual experience through the fantastic. Her texts undeniably are mishandled if read only as explorations of the narrow themes of the personal and the domestic. Her *shishôsetsu* also present ways in which the individual experiences him or her self. Thus the reader is not led toward a simple emotional identification with the protagonist in her works, but also is led to consider the ways we/others experience the world, and how we know rather than more simply what we know. The conclusion that Hijiya-Kirschnereit arrives at, that “the critical or emancipatory experiences, as we know them in the Western Enlightenment view of man, are alien to the discourse of and around *shishôsetsu*”(324-25) is also problematic in its assumption of the hero’s self-indulgence and the text’s lack of social vision or philosophical depth. The text’s focus, in this case on the written body, need not dictate its effect. Whether a philosophico-cathartic affect is realized or not in *shishôsetsu* is of less importance to the present study than a critical generic interest that would dictate its absence. Throughout the discussion here, *shishôsetsu*’s social relevance was demonstrated through early Taishô *shishôsetsu* selves and by the contemporary female and political subjects who, as performances of individual difference, consistently challenge dominant forms of authority. Thus, as

illustrated in the studies of Uno's and Tsushima's writing, while *shishôsetsu* features the intimate life of an individual, the individual body is by no means cut off from socio-cultural phenomena, nor would the individuals portrayed be interesting to readers if they were.

Shishôsetsu, featuring the individual subject, is thus a genre as much about the relations of difference and collectivity, of the private and the public, as it is about the individual body. Conceived as a process of literary communication and reception foregrounding the individual who risks exposing him or her self, *shishôsetsu* alternately may be considered, as I have called for in this study of Uno's and Tsushima's work, as a literary pursuit of a self that may also be emancipatory in the social realm. Uno's and Tsushima's portrayals of contemporary Japanese, independent women and individuals are irrevocably illuminations of modern and contemporary social, political, and historical conditions in Japan. The reader's response to their personal writing need not be restricted to a singularly emotional, rather than intellectual, engagement with the *shishôsetsu* subject and text. Importantly, rather than having their sexual and other desires articulated for them, particularly through representations of desire and of "Woman" in various texts by male *shishôsetsu* authors, and in the limited exploration of "women" in relation to male personal experience that form a preponderant part of the literary canon, the individual voices of Uno and Tsushima articulate the political possibilities of diverse individuals' (women's) desires and lives.

Their narrating voices articulate, even through shifting temporal, fictional, and narrational perspectives, temporarily cohesive "I's," which in turn relate to the reader's sense of life, to a sense of the unique self of the author in society. Uno, we have seen, problematizes the notion of "true identity" by re-writing herself so many times, and Tsushima explores individual experience in non-traditional "realist" forms. While problematizing notions of the coherent, cohesive self, the *oeuvres* of both these authors not only question the elusive true self tied to notions of Japanese modernity and its

epistemologies that lie implicitly within traditional genre criticism. They also provide readers with the presentation of individual experience that can be enlightening, educative, or emancipatory. Furthermore, and making no claims to simple veracity, the authors present for public consumption (a fiction of) a self, confirming an illusion of reality and of individual identity that is upheld by the *shishôsetsu* operation featuring the relation of personal difference.

Chapter Six: “Literature of the Lost Home”: Leaving the Nest

Liturature of the Lost Home is the title of Paul Anderer’s collection of translated works of the eminent modern literary and social critic Kobayashi Hideo, whom I mentioned earlier for his dual interest in defining the *shishôsetsu* both in relation to the European literary tradition and in describing the uniqueness of the Japanese literary genre. I use the title of his translated works here for two reasons, the first being to indicate the shift, hence “leaving the nest,” that literary criticism has made since Kobayashi’s death in 1983. As Hijiya-Kirshnerreit also notes, his death not only marked a “generational change in Japanese literary criticism”(xi) involving a “reawakened interest following a revalorization” of *shishôsetsu*, but also was a period which showed a “drawing [of] a much more positive picture of the genre than in preceding decades”(Hijiya-Kirshnerreit xi). This renewed, positive interest in *shishôsetsu* involved a trend of literary research in Japan to “increasingly turn to more recent topics which, although this was never explicitly stated, had somehow been regarded as less serious objects of research before”(Hijiya-Kirshnerreit xi-xii). The emergence of new *shishôsetsu* definitions and of the increased serious literary attention the genre received in the late 1980s and 1990s is demonstrated in recent full-length studies of modern Japanese literature such as those by Fowler, Karatani, Fujii, and Suzuki among others. I use the title “Literature of the Lost Home” also ironically, in part, in order to underscore some of the traps *shishôsetsu* criticism may place for itself should its interests lie in isolating a particular historical, nationalist, or gendered literary phenomenon or subject as a generic metaphorical “home.” With this second sense, then, the universals discussed in chapter one are re-addressed here with a goal toward solidifying the ways in which we can critically rethink the literary category of *shishôsetsu* and its functions.

In this final chapter investigating generic homes, then, I begin with the nationalist claim. I will show how, by redefining the *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body* or *writing around the body*, I hope not so much to evade the assertion that *shishôsetsu* is “based on the assumption, widely held in Japan, that *shishôsetsu* exists and [that it] stands apart from other literary genres”(Hijiya-Kirschnereit 171). Rather, I attempt to escape the universal generic claims made by those who propose that *shishôsetsu* “can only be defined in relation to other Japanese genres”(Hijiya-Kirschnereit 171) and that it is “typically Japanese.” Countless critics have developed genre studies based implicitly or explicitly on this latter presumption.¹⁴⁴ As is apparent in these and other studies, critical treatments of the *shishôsetsu* have been characterized almost entirely by an emphasis on the genre’s identity as a national “Japanese” literary phenomenon.

¹⁴⁴ Though many of these approaches exist, Hijiya-Kirschnereit lists following examples: Senuma Shigeki states that *shishôsetsu* is a “typically Japanese genre” and “form of thought”(Shishôsetsuron no keifu [The genealogy of shishôsetsu]); Inagaki Tatsurô finds that the genre is a “fatal Japanese reality”(Shishôsetsu no seiritsu [The form of shishôsetsu]); Takahashi Hideo that it is a “cultural necessity”(Genso to shite no ‘watakushi’ [The ‘I’ as element]); and Ara Masahiro states that *shishôsetsu* is a “method with very close ties to the psychological tendencies of the Japanese people”(Shishôsetsuron [Discourse on the shishôsetsu])” (Hijiya-Kirschnereit 7). Similarly, Kobayashi insisted “that it was no longer possible to distinguish ‘foreign’ literature from Japanese writing”(Anderer 11), but, as Anderer also notes, this comparison is conducted “as if these were fixed and separable categories”(11). Kobayashi’s nationalist comparatist preoccupation remains apparent, as he elsewhere distinguishes, for example, “between the ‘socialized self’ of Rousseau’s *Confessions* and the more isolated selves of Japanese confessionalsists”(Anderer 9).

Looking back historically, Suzuki also notes how Nakamura Mitsuo, one of three major critics who dominated 1930s literary criticism (along with Kobayashi and Itô Sei, whose positions were mentioned in chapter one), described the “uniquely Japanese” character of the Japanese *shishôsetsu*, and ultimately “reinforced what became orthodox literary history”(65). Signaling the production of what he called “a ‘uniquely Japanese’ form called the I-novel,” he helped create a genealogy of the I-novel in the late Taishô period that was then “subsequently adopted by all literary histories in one form or another”(Suzuki 65). The widely accepted critical trajectory of Japanese modern literature, and the individual subject it featured, established by this and similar observations of the 20s and 30s not only isolated the modern subject given expression in the *shishôsetsu*. These approaches also centered on a genre modeled against the West as well as marked the “progress” of the Japanese nation.¹⁴⁵

Demonstrating the way the narrative of *shishôsetsu* criticism continued to develop in relation to the West, Suzuki describes three periods of intense critical discussion. Fluctuations of *shishôsetsu* criticism occurred during:

- (1) the late Taishô period (mid-1920’s), (2) around 1935, and (3) immediately after World War II (late 1940’s and early 1950’s)...[the latter being a

¹⁴⁵ Suzuki’s study of the I-novel meta-narrative parallels the present examination of critical literature surrounding the genre. She describes a narrative from the 1920s through the 1960s that sustains these beliefs. “First, the notion of the I-novel was always formulated on a polar axis that contrasted the Western novel with its Japanese counterpart...Second, from the time of the term’s appearance in the early 1920’s, “I-novel” was always a value-laden concept... Third, the evaluation of the I-novel extended not only to the author’s “self” and “life” but also to Japanese society and to the nature of Japan’s modernity (*kindai*) as well as of its history and tradition”(3).

period when] the I-novel again became a serious topic of criticism after Japan's defeat in World War II....

The devastating defeat caused the Japanese to re-examine and reflect critically on the various systems and ideologies in place prior to the war, including literature...[to ends such that] one characteristic of these essays is the attempt to establish a larger historical perspective and comparative ideology.(55-59)

The above passage gestures clearly toward the nationalist ideological impetus behind and incorporated into many of the theories and criticism of the genre *shishôsetsu*. Writers and critics of the genre can be seen to have established comparative and culturally reflexive [East vs West] structures, particularly in times of historical national crises, to meta-critical ends. This narration of the genesis and singularity of the modern Japanese subject and his experiences has a partner: *Nihonjinron*, or the theories of Japanese uniqueness pitting East versus West, were also articulations of national identity realized in *shishôsetsu* definitions.

Apparently, the two forces that have historically sustained I-novel discourse and that have a nationalist component, namely “the untiring search for a ‘true modern self’ and the increasing concern for the origin and identity of the ‘Japanese self’”(Suzuki 185), do not only surface, though, in modern literature and that produced immediately after the war. Hijiya-Kirschnereit also notes a later re-emergence of *shishôsetsu* to the fore in more contemporary comparative literary criticism, that was also paralleled by another increase of *nihonjinron* in the 1970s, where both ideologies responded again to matters of national culture and identity (6). Even now it seems that *shishôsetsu* criticism, with its nationalist interest in the identification and construction of the modern and contemporary subject, has experienced a fluctuating history of popularity that in turn reflects various ideologies, including nationalist ones, operative worldwide in the literary institution throughout the century. Notably, on the other hand, Japanese writers throughout the twentieth century

have themselves continued unremittently with self-conscious explorations of the individual in society and with the production of texts considered members of the genre *shishôsetsu*.

The critical discourse of the I-novel developed both in Japan and elsewhere therefore can be seen to operate beyond the boundaries of literature and literary criticism to inform views of Japanese selfhood, society, modernity, and tradition. Notably, these notions are further coupled with the idea of “Japan” and modern Japanese progress narrated against that of Europe and the West. Acknowledging the ideologically generative nature of *shishôsetsu* criticism, genre criticism also could be turned back on its agents to show how critics on both sides of the ocean have propagated, erected, or supported certain “identities” in their critical examination of the genre *shishôsetsu* and its “unique” characteristics. It is in this way, as Suzuki also astutely notes, that “this genealogy, which supplied the main narrative for the ‘history of modern Japanese literature,’ [can be seen to represent also] an autobiographical moment in which the Japanese literary and cultural tradition was retroactively constructed in the intense debate over the meaning of modernity, westernization, Japanese identity, and the self”(65). And, I would add, this cultural autobiography is not only a Japanese narrative, but is also evidence of how non-Japanese critics have structured Japanese cultural identity. Moreover, lying within this historically and culturally overdetermined autobiography is what de Bary calls a “modernizationist” ideology, namely an identity that “can only represent Japan as several steps behind the center and source of modernity, which is the West”(de Bary, 1988: 604).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Culturally comparative issues similar to this are raised by Sakai Naoki in “Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism”(1988). He points out that there is no reason for the West/non-West binary determining the projection of modernity, except that it “definitely establishes the putative unity of the West, a nebulous

It is apparent how the genealogy/identity developed by *shishôsetsu* criticism is an historically larger-scale nationalist search for the “I” as a center for that which is “Japanese.” However, as I have argued throughout the present study, even on a textual level, a singular unique subject ultimately proves an illusory—or at least precarious—distinguishing feature or “identity” of the genre *shishôsetsu*.¹⁴⁷ Removing criticism from its own specific historical, national, and cultural assumptions, and redefining *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*, the present study thus also defamiliarizes I-novel discourse that, as Suzuki describes it, “has become oblivious of its figurative and historical nature”(65).

However, unlike a “transcendental” critical position that Suzuki advocates, the “secular” framework by which I examine *shishôsetsu* exhibits an understanding of *writing of the body* as an act that is tied to the different historically, gendered, socially, and culturally specific body and its experience. Understanding the function of *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body*, moreover, does not demand that the genre be narrated as a specific, unique identity or body, nor does it demand, for that matter, the texts take particular forms. As such, this redefinition of *shishôsetsu* is not necessarily dependent on the isolation of a “Japanese” body. The present readings of Uno’s and Tsushima’s *shishôsetsu* here,

but commanding positivity,” establishing the West as universal, the non-West as particular (3).

¹⁴⁷ The historical, comparative and ideological investment apparent in the literary institution with regard to definitions of *shishôsetsu* is also an implicit reason why Karatani does not provide a “genealogy” of *shishôsetsu*, and does not trace the history of modern Japanese literature as a “quest for interiority” predicated on Western development. It is notable, moreover, that because of this refusal, Hijiya-Kirschnereit voices her “disappointment” in Karatani’s lack of historical comparative contextualization (1996: xiii).

therefore, pose a challenge to *shishôsetsu* genre criticism's own meta-textually integrated "identity." As *writing of the body*, the *shishôsetsu* act simultaneously can accommodate the writing and reading of this national, gendered, and historical subject without demanding that the represented body be theorized solely as a particular body.

My re-definition of *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body* thus operates differently than all previous *shishôsetsu* descriptions and definitions that take as their premise that *shishôsetsu* is a unique "Japanese" genre. It is likely that no study of the *shishôsetsu* "can ignore the question of Western influence" (Hijiya-Kirschner 3) on the genre, as one critic among others warns. However, genre criticism that operates as a metaphor of ideas about modern Japan and "Japanese-ness" may also be read as the invention and colonization, by both Japanese and other critics alike, of Japan's own modern past and contemporary culture. Mimicing the autobiographical fictive mode of writing that is itself based on recollection and memory, ironically the impetus shown by *shishôsetsu* criticism for a culture to create, or even re-create, itself and its identity is apparent. Similarly, the desire of other scholars worldwide, as well as the act itself, of characterizing a literary phenomenon as "Japanese" is also brought to light. If *shishôsetsu* is, and is not, unique, and it does, and it does not, portray and hinge on a particularly "Japanese" sense of self, the criteria for isolating *shishôsetsu* could be productively re-examined. Rather than definitively deciding this paradox for either side, this study has examined how genre criticism has found it necessary to recover this "lost home" of the "Japanese" subject, and further suggests ways that this "home" may be left.

A second, related universal that demands reconsideration in light of the present analysis of nationalist genre definitions, history, and the redefinition of *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body* is the idea of the historical unity and uniqueness of the Japanese literary tradition. Ôba Minako (1931—) not only states that "the author of *The Kagerô Diary* [c. 954-974] was the first to take her internal struggle and suffering as a woman and make of it a literature of the self, characterized by a strong sense of personality and individuality," but

also that “it has been said that the origins of the *shishôsetsu* (“I-novel”) in Japan can be traced to *The Kagerô Diary*”(25). Inserting *shishôsetsu* in a broader historical frame, certainly many apologists and scholars of Japanese literature have attested to the unique tradition of personal, lyrical writing in Japan.¹⁴⁸ While on the one hand genre criticism of *shishôsetsu* displays a strong nationalist interest in defining the modern nation through its early twentieth-century literary manifestations, on the other hand can be found those critics who, like Ôba, are interested in establishing a unique tradition of “Japanese” cultural history. Among this latter group is Saeki Shôichi, who states that Japanese readers have “overindulged themselves in a taste for personal writings for centuries”(73). He finds that “an intense preoccupation with the private aspect of life—of the emotional and psychological complexities of human relationships—that is characteristic of ‘narcissistic’ and ‘self-absorbed’ Heian women writers has become the [unfortunate] obsession ‘serious, talented’ [read modern, male] writers have succumbed to”(73). In a partly condemnatory manner, Saeki remarks on the indulgent interest in the individual exhibited historically in Japan, and on the lamentable interest in the emotional and psychological realms of individual experience sustained in twentieth-century Japanese writing by males.

According to him, as well as other critics, “serious” twentieth-century men’s writing has become narcissistic and self-absorbed. With the double implication that it is an

¹⁴⁸ The Heian era featured a predominately female canon of personal writing, including works such as the *Kagerô Diary*, the *Sarashina Diary*, *Nezame at Night*, the *Tale of Genji*, and the *Pillowbook of Sei Shonagon*. These personal fictional narratives, while all more or less “factual,” also can be seen to conform loosely to the broad definitions offered for *shishôsetsu*, as “an autobiographical form narrated in the first or third person in such a way as to represent with utter conviction the author’s personal experience”(Fowler).

Nonetheless, of interest to the present study are the ideological ends to which criticism either denies or augments these links.

historically “Japanese” as well as “female” tendency to relate experience through a focus on the intimate subject, Saeki’s contestable position, however, proves itself to be a uni-dimensional approach to what are complex tensions involving specific critical meta-narratives. These are generated as a result of: 1) reading a “Japanese” tendency toward narrating experience via the personal; 2) forming a comparison between “women’s” and “men’s” writing of self and society with the latter eulogized by elite notions of “serious” literature; and 3) denying the wider social impact and political import that intimate writing of the individual may hold for writer and reader. Critical appraisals such as this critic’s thus cannot treat adequately the discursive and transgressive qualities of the “I” narrated in *shishôsetsu* generally, nor the written subject in both modern and contemporary writing and women’s *shishôsetsu* specifically.

Responding to such critical narratives that trace a legacy of female personal writing in Japan extending from the Heian era, Suzuki again demonstrates the ideological nature of literary criticism. She warns against the wholesale acceptance of a deliberate and illusory connection constructed between *shishôsetsu* and an “indigenous” Japanese classical literary tradition established by 1920s criticism.¹⁴⁹ As I demonstrated in chapter two, by

¹⁴⁹ Suzuki states: “From the 1920’s...the I-novel meta-narrative not only defined the modern Japanese novel as a form that directly transcribed the author’s lived experience but also emphasized the confessional, self-exploratory, autobiographical nature of the ‘indigenous’ Japanese literary tradition, describing classical literature with such highly Western, romantic terms and phrases as ‘immediacy,’ ‘directness,’ ‘lyricism,’ ‘spiritual search for the self,’ ‘unity with nature.’ Both detractors and eulogizers of the I-novel, who unwittingly collaborated in characterizing the I-novel as direct, immediate, and factual as opposed to fictional, projected these same notions of directness and factuality on the so-called indigenous tradition and emphasized its continuity with the I-novel. I-novel critical discourse, in short, became from the mid-1920’s the dominant paradigm and meta-

focusing on traditional *shishôsetsu* as well as studies of women writers, it is important to recognize the particular social, political, literary, philosophical, and linguistic climate of Taishô Japan that gave rise to a particular notion of the modern Japanese individual in society who is featured in *shishôsetsu* and its criticism. At the same time, it is also imperative to recognize how this particular *modern* individual should not come to overdetermine later twentieth-century *contemporary* conceptions of *writing of the body* and subsequent definitions of other bodies of the genre *shishôsetsu*. In any case, it seems crucial that *shishôsetsu* genre criticism does not move away from its individual texts for the purpose of becoming a paradigmatic gauge of “Japanese” culture and tradition.

Saeki’s remark on the intimate tradition of Japanese writing also raises the issue of “female” writing. As such, his position brings the table a third universal, one that I have explored at length in the section “Why Women’s Writing?” and to which I give brief attention again here. Cultural and generic criticism did not always find *shishôsetsu* a worthy subject of critical endeavor, but, when focused on narrating the modern subject found in *shishôsetsu*, and thus designating the genre as “serious” literature, criticism has narrated almost exclusively a masculine subject. This led, as demonstrated earlier by the reception of Uno’s and Tsushima’s texts, to a situation where genre criticism almost schizophrenically developed two separate streams of autobiographical fiction, cutting off women’s writing from *shishôsetsu* generally, even while it occasionally acknowledged what was described as a rich legacy of women’s personal writing.

The above generic narrative, that also relies on a categorization based on gender, draws out yet another universal in the present discussion of women’s writing, which is namely a tendency described of all women’s writing. Some feminist critics, such as Estelle Jelinek, find that all female writing exhibits a preference for the private and the emotional

narrative by which all literary works, including classical texts, were described, judged, and interpreted, regulating the reception and production of modern literary texts and governing contemporary views of the Japanese literary and cultural tradition”(3).

rather than for the public and the intellectual, and favours the construction of a self in relation to others. This gender-oriented description can and has been used productively, evaluatively, and/or pejoratively to describe women's writing and a female tendency, particularly in life writing, on different continents. Some of the dangers inherent in such gender-based criteria of categorization were addressed as I interrogated the ambivalent classification of women's writing in Japan as *joryû bungaku*. Again, women's writing was set apart immediately and often pejoratively from "serious" men's writing and *shishôsetsu* on the basis, apparently, of its limited intent, content, and perceived or assumed impact on the receiver. In this context I have shown how Tsushima's writing in particular, which raises deep epistemological questions such as how we know the world as well as the socio-psychological concerns of marginalized experience, boldly destroys any preconceptions of the limitations of women's experience and intimate, personal writing. However, whether positive or negative, when faced with autobiography's individual body "en-gendered" in different ways by Western and Eastern literary and cultural systems alike, Japanese women writers of *shishôsetsu* and its scholars cannot help but be conscious, in the end, of at least the possibility that women's voices will be heard and read within particular ideological and gendered frames which form around women's bodies, whether or not they need be critically circumscribed by them. At the same time, moreover, if the ambivalent category of *women's writing* can be used productively, that is, without precluding "women's" membership to one or another genre simultaneously and hierarchically, as Derrida suggests is possible, we might also realize a productive space for women writers in the Japanese marketplace.

Regarding another implication the above critic makes, as related to *shishôsetsu*'s public and philosophical dimensions, the present study of Uno's and Tsushima's writing in particular has explicitly interrogated the position that autobiographical fiction is a conceptually limited genre. With respect to aesthetic achievement, thematic content, or narrative method, women's *shishôsetsu*, and *shishôsetsu* generally, is not limited through

its intent to feature the “private” versus “public,” or “emotional” versus “intellectual” as it features relations of difference within the (repressive) systems of authority in which the individual operates. *Shishôsetsu* features the individual and personal, but clearly readings of the individual subject potentially and politically engage the social, cultural, and intellectual realms. In effect, as the presentation of a different identity within society, the individual positioning within the social *is* political. To essentially describe the affect of the intimate and personal *shishôsetsu* and women’s *shishôsetsu* as limited by their focus is problematic. In sum, describing the creation of a self in relation to others as either a “Japanese” or “female” tendency ignores the discursive production of an individual body, of *difference* in relation to other bodies, of *shishôsetsu* that is not necessarily gender nor culturally specific.

In a study related to this critico-generic distinction between the intellectual versus emotional, Miner, as mentioned, makes a cultural distinction between the Western “mimetic” and the Eastern “affective-expressive” literary modes. He orchestrates what seems a promising universal comparison between European and Japanese literature. Ultimately, however, it has limited applicability toward understanding whatever he construes monolithically as “Japanese” literature and culture. As well, the transformative and intellectual potency of both modern and contemporary *shishôsetsu*, autobiographical genres, and subject construction as I have demonstrated may be culturally indistinguishable through the totalizing yet ambiguous terms he proposes. Transversing and complicating what Miner defines as “Western” notions of representation, moreover, are certain traditional, modern Western or Japanese realist approaches to autobiographical fiction—produced by both Western and Japanese critics—that are essentially neither cross-cultural nor culturally distinct, as shown in earlier chapters. Regardless of where the theory is generated, any invocation of a unified, authoritative Subject represented in mimetic personal writing is also similarly restricting, when considering the discursively narrated

shishôsetsu subject in modern and contemporary writing, for its liberal humanist reliance on the notion of the singularly identifiable, cohesive, and actual Subject.

Bringing together the above universals that have sought to describe *shishôsetsu*, my study of Uno's and Tsushima's autobiographical fiction spanning the twentieth century has demonstrated that isolating *shishôsetsu* discussion to the particular narratives of the "modern" "Japanese" and "male" subject suggested only by certain structurally or deductively similar texts demonstrates structural, national, cultural, modern, epistemological, canonical, and masculine critical preoccupations at work in *shishôsetsu* genre studies. In addition, I have also demonstrated how women's writing and women's subjects are not only subversive but also exciting inclusions into the genre of autobiographical fiction that has unremittently featured difference in the unique individual. Deploying certain universals in examinations of *shishôsetsu*, as well as in *shishôsetsu* subject creation, occurs at the expense of acknowledging these and other marginalized subjects, as well as at the risk of misidentifying how the subject is generated and becomes "known" in personal literature of the twentieth century. By centering on the relation of difference, implying the risk of an individual writing his/her identity, I have isolated the integral relation narrated by the authorial body of *shishôsetsu*. And, as seems called for by this intrinsic generic relation of difference, I have investigated Tsushima's and Uno's writing in order to demonstrate the *function*, rather than determine generic correspondence to a specific *form*, of *shishôsetsu*.

Critical theories that invoke an understanding of the discursive, social subject have been allied in this study of the corporeal authorial body to describe personal identity performed in *shishôsetsu*. Employing ideas such as non-positivist notions of the self, identity as the construction and relation of difference, and the relation of risk integral to self-disclosure in the social realm, helps redirect studies of *shishôsetsu* beyond conceptions of the genre dominated by the modernist realist confession. The relation between "sex" and "truth" replaced by reading the performance of risk and identity for the genre underlines

the dynamism of *shishôsetsu* as personal disclosure leading to the discovery of identity. Despite isolating a unique, authorial body, in addition, the approach offered here for reading and writing the mutable and changing authorial body is not circumscribed by a hagiographic desire for a corporeal, absolute Author, nor for a generic “all-mediating body”(Lamarre 11) of *shishôsetsu*.

Though a genre of writing focused on the intimate, personal, emotional, and psychological, *shishôsetsu* nonetheless promises more than a glimpse into a minute segment of human experience because the author is not disembodied. That is, the individual is not created and read apart from its own physical and historical reality, and, therefore, specific considerations of gender, culture, history, and society and the various ideologies within which the individual is discursively and necessarily part. Without being defined by any particular one, yet within these discourses, then, *shishôsetsu* can be seen to both elicit pleasure in its artistry and be provocative in its truth in the representation of an identity. Similar to the possibilities Cixous finds in women’s writing,¹⁵⁰ *shishôsetsu*, as *writing of the body*, can be a call to action, revolution, and transgression because the written individual body confronts social norms and institutions. Through the act itself of writing *shishôsetsu*, then, the body of the author is politically engaged, and carries with it a subversive potential because it embodies “difference.”

The relation of individual difference, and the author’s own self-conscious representation, as I pointed out earlier, are two integral aspects of *shishôsetsu* featuring a unique “I” in relation to others. Moreover, as *shishôsetsu* is realized by the intent of both author and reader to find a real body behind *shishôsetsu*, both difference and representation also underline the discursive play with identity unique to a genre that shifts between reality and fiction. The sheer potential of this genre of individual performance deserves emphasis: among all other genres, *shishôsetsu* uniquely features the problems and possibilities of

¹⁵⁰ Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976; 890).

fiction and fact, of play and the political, of rhetoric and identity, of both the individual and the social. Because the genre features a fictional subject who is nonetheless *real*, it seems even more imperative in this light that genre criticism avoid isolating only certain, objectively identifiable texts as members of the *shishôsetsu* genre based on a specific historically or culturally dominant canon, and acknowledge its own generically diverse bodies. Uno's and Tsushima's *shishôsetsu* have served to demonstrate how previously dominant generic discourse does not accommodate adequately this richness and diversity of Japan's own literary history, post-World War II and contemporary twentieth-century *shishôsetsu*, modes of realism, the complex market of *shishôsetsu* and self-conscious representation, the commodification of the individual and whatever access to truth/knowledge he/she is perceived to promise or possess, nor women's I-writing.

Finally, if *shishôsetsu* is "an act which, because of its humanity, commands our respect"(McClellen, 323),¹⁵¹ genre membership need not be mediated by a particular body nor the mimetic (whether rhetorical or not) transcription of events that flowered in the Naturalist movement and have served to guide genre criticism. *Shishôsetsu* may be productively considered as a discursive function of the construction of an individual subject who risks personal disclosure and who theatrically performs the "other" identity that may lead to emancipation and liberation, even in the more fantastic or imaginative forms of twentieth-century autobiographical fiction.

¹⁵¹ McClellen adds: "And if a term like 'sincerity' has any meaning here, it has meaning insofar as it expresses the writer's awareness of the responsibility involved in that act"(323). For the purpose of the present study I would add that the sincerity and responsibility McClellen isolates on the part of the *writer* describe the motivation and action of *shishôsetsu* equally applicable to the *reader*, the literary institution, and the marketplace.

This suggestion of a re-reading of personal fictional writing in Japan is not to say that the individuals and texts presented in early twentieth-century *shishôsetsu* are not the product of a unique political, linguistic, philosophical and social environment. Nor would I argue that the genre *shishôsetsu* does not contain the structurally unique characteristics other theorists have described for the genre. Nor would I suggest that my position is any less politically motivated and historically circumscribed than that of other theorists of *shishôsetsu* looking at the modern subject in Japanese literature. If, as Saeki among others bravely announces, “all modern Japanese authors have, at one time or another, written autobiographical fiction”(73),¹⁵² I would offer, rather, readings of two authors motivated by an interest in re-interpreting the critical focus of studies of the genre.

This study of Uno’s and Tsushima’s I-writing serves as a re-examination of forms of critical authority in personal autobiographical fiction in Japan, reconsiders the possibility of a literary text’s membership within the *shishôsetsu* genre, and looks at ways texts have been granted canonical status based on their agreement with a system of critical, philosophical, cultural and national values which were shown to fluctuate along with changes in the Japanese social, historical, and political climate. I do not dehistoricize the genre’s texts, therefore, but rather look to the historical circumstances that have

¹⁵² Saeki is not the only literary critic to describe this tendency of modern Japanese writing. Hijiya-Kirschnereit also notes that “there is no dearth of such remarks”(2), and quotes three more examples. *Shishôsetsu* is, according to Hisamatsu Sen’ichi, “a genre that has remained highly important in Japanese literature down to the present day.” For Morikawa Tatusya, “[w]hether we like it or not—since the beginning of the modern age *shishôsetsu* has continuously been the dominant mode of Japanese literature, that is, it possesses as it were archetypal (*genkei*) rank and importance.” Usui Yoshimi states that “[t]here are really no contemporary writers who have not written *shishôsetsu*”(Hijiya Kirschnereit 2).

engendered particular readings of the genre charged with the interests of perpetuating the dominance of a select group of individuals. The present study, by looking at characteristics of contemporary women's *shishôsetsu*, thus affords an historical and contemporary re-examination of the nebulous concept of *shishôsetsu* and the individual on which it focuses as presented in twentieth-century Japanese literature.

This study could not be offered without the acknowledgement of my own position within a dynamic process of (hopefully self-reflective) engagement with otherness. I remain wary of the criticism Monnet levels against “politically correct” interpretive strategies for examining literature, which, while “‘speaking for others’ also effectively covers [subaltern or other] voices, once again silencing or misrepresenting them”(note 416). By investigating the literary interface between Japanese women's personal narratives and Western, as well as Japanese, critical approaches to autobiography and *shishôsetsu*, I indicate some areas where the totalizing criteria of theories fail or succeed in accommodating individual voices of Japanese women's writing. Because they are systems of representation through which we define ourselves in relation to others and to social structures, ideologies are also present in critical work surrounding discussion of the “Japanese” or “Western” aesthetic object and descriptions of the narrated subject, as I have shown.

The hermeneutic or explanatory approach to *shishôsetsu* as *writing of the body* will allow for the intentions of both the producer and receiver to be considered for genre categorization. Similarly, the performance of identity and the political tensions raised in the relation of self and society, of “other” and authority, will be acknowledged. As seen in the operation of the commodity *shishôsetsu* in the literary market and the commodification of the individual desired of *shishôsetsu*, the power of the individual as signifier has

remained a compelling phenomenon of twentieth-century Japanese literature. The desire for the individual evidenced in the surging popularity of the genre can be understood, finally, as a manifestation of the struggle that goes on worldwide of the individual subject to define her/himself within and against our social institutions. That Uno and Tsushima have taken such disparate routes in their exploration of personal experience serves to emphasize the diversity not only of experience, but also the multiplicity of ways of understanding experience in the *shishôsetsu*.

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Appendices

(1)

きょうから、あなたへの手紙を書きはじめることにしました。。。

あなたは生き、そして死んだ。

肉体としてのみ見れば、生も死も、あなたの時代と千年後の私の時代とに変わりがあるはずはないのですが、生きている間に眼を向けると、着る服も違えば、住む家も違う。悩みされる病気も変わるし、娯楽も変わる。それで、惑わされてしまうこともあるでしょうが、死ばかりはいくら窓わされたくても惑いようもなく、どんな時代、どんな国でも、なんら変わりがない。私の見知っている死と同じ死を、あなたも迎えた。決して、それは私の知らない死ではなかった。

こうして、私はあなたの死を身近な者の死に重ねて見届けてから、あなたの存在を生き生きと感ずるようになったのです。あなたに語りかけずにはいられなくなりました。（「手紙」7－9）

(2)

私の子どもの場合は、。。。

。。。お湯のお風呂で、浮輪を水遊びの好きな子どもでした。

。。。それがあの夜は、私が様子を見に行くと、仰向けにお湯に浮かんでいたのです。気持良さそうに微笑を浮かべながら。

私を驚かすために、いたずらをしているのか、と一瞬、思いました。ですから咄嗟に抱き上げた時は、まださほど深刻なことになっているとは思っていませんでした。体を抱き上げても、揺すぶっても、なにも反応がないことに気づいてからはじめて、なにか大変なことが起こったらしいと知らされました。

すぐに救急車を呼び、到着を待つ間、子どもの口に息を吹き入れ、胸を押すことを繰り返していました。（26－27）

(3)

あなたの祈ることを知っていた人でもあったでしょう。昔は宗教にすがり、迷信じみたことも信じていたが、今は違う、と胸を張る人たちが珍しくはありません。でも、なにが違うのでしょうか。あなただって、死をまえにすると、ただ祈らずにいられないから祈っていただけなのではありません。

こうして、夢にも思っていなかったまわり道を経て、私はあなたの物語に結局、また辿り着いてしまいました。

いったん、自分の物語を憎て去ったつもりの私でしたが、あなたの物語に改めて踏み入って、あなたの祈りを聞き届けたくてしまったのです。私は今でも神仙に祈ることができずにいます。せめて、あなたの祈りに重ねて、私自身の物語を生き返らせてやれたら。。。それが、今の私の祈りなのです。（46－47）

(4)

人は生まれつつけ、死につつけている。

。。。その枠組みのなかで私は生き、小説を書きつつけてきた。そう思うと、無性に過去の時代に生きた、私と似た立場の女性と話を交わしたくなった。

。。。今の時代に生きながら、人間の性と死の普遍的な意味に近づくためにも、私は千年前に生き、死んだ女性に語りかけたかったのだ。

。。。そうした作業を、私は井戸の底で一人きりではじめたのだ。その作業は、つまり私にとって、小説を書くということだったのだ。そして私はこうした自分の体験から、小説を書くとはどういうことなのか、をはじめて教えられたような気もした。（「孤独から孤独へ」420-421）

(5)

小説を書いている本人は小さな、しかし深い井戸の底で一人きりで呟いているような、そんな思いに閉めざされているので、もしかしたら、こんな呟きは誰の耳にも届かないのかもしれない、届かない方が当り前のことなのだ、とも考えがちなのに、必ずどこかに共感してくれる人がいるということ、すぐに、ではなくとも、何年か経ってから、思いがけないところで井戸の底の呟きに気がついてくれる人がいるということ、このことに文学の不思議な力を感じさせられるし、書き手として、いちばん素朴なところでその力に驚かされる。（「孤独から孤独へ」417）

(6)

「更級日記」も、「枕草子」も、そしてもちろん、あなたが愛読し、深く影響を受けている「源氏物語」も、。。。。

。。。あなたの物語を身代なものとして楽しんでます。

。。。。

苦痛というものはじめて知ったのは、そんなこととは関係なく、十年も前、一人の男と出会い、その男から得られる安らぎに愛着を覚えるようになってからのことです。。。いつでも一対の男女として生活をつつきたい、と望むようになりました。

そう、ちょうど、「かげろう日記」のみちつねの母のように。

(14-16)。

(7)

書き手の人生にも、いろいろ小さな出来事は起こる。人から見て特別なことではなくても、個人的にはそれぞれ大きな意味を持つ。

「夜の光に追われて」を書き始める前にも、私はひとつのそうした出来事を体験した。家族の一員が突然に、この世を去った。

。。。その時、私は小説というものが結果的に受け持つイメージを憎んでいたのではないかと、今、振り返るとそんな気がしてならない。つまり、現実のものではあるが、決して個人的にはリアルに把握できない社会に分散され、気まぐれな反応を時に、見せながら、自分の手からみるみる遠く離れていく「本という形になった小説」のイメージ。

けれども、そうしたイメージを必要以上に意識し、憎悪を感じたのだろう。愛するものを死の領域から呼び戻す手段はなにもない。言葉も、もちろん、なんの力にもならない。それなら、その事実を、呑みこみ、なにもない状態に自分を置いておきたい。

しかし、もちろん、なにもない状態で人間が生きつつける、などということは非現実的な話で、私の場合、井戸の底でしきりに、なぜ私は小説を書きつつけて生きてきたのだろう、なにを私は小説や詩に求めつつけていたのだろう、と考えないわけにもいかなかったのだ。（「孤独から孤独へ」418-19）

(8)

私小説：

いわゆる一人称小説、イッヒ ロマンは必ずしも日本だけのものでわないが、私小説というときは、西欧文学流の小説概念とは趣を異にする近代日本文学独自の小説形態である。すなわち、作者自身を主人公とし、その日常生活に取材した自己の体験を文学的に追求したもので、田山花袋の「布団」（1907：明治40）に始まるとされている。

私小説のもつ痛烈無比のリアリティを文学精神の日本的開花とし、純文学の正統とされた時期があったが、戦後は一変し、私小説撲滅論とすらいえる総排撃に見舞われるが、その後衰退したのは論のほうで私小説は依然衰えることなく、時代的変容を重ねながらも盛行を続けている。

私小説にも「一分一厘も歪めずこしらえずに写生」（瀧井孝作「無限抱擁」）するというものから、「何もゆがめずにありのままの私を描くだけでなく、そこに虚構をまじえても私小説の私は崩れない」と自らの作品の私小説性を語ったことにもなっている藤枝静男のことばに示されているように、島尾敏雄、林京子、高橋たか子、津島佑子、大江健三郎、らも含めて、「歴史、社会、知の世界にまで個としての「私」を浸透させようとする試み」（川西政明）という、伝統的な私小説の枠を破った新しい、しかも優れた私小説が今日の小説界をいまなお力強く支えている。

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